

Moscow welcomes Iraq-Kurd accord

MOSCOW (R) — The Soviet Union Monday welcomed an autonomy agreement for Iraqi Kurds worked out with Baghdad, saying it will help the peaceful dialogue engaged and hope its participants will be able to reach full agreement. Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaly Churkin told reporters. In a meeting with Kurdish leaders last week, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein agreed in principle to implement a 20-year-old autonomy agreement with the Kurds. But the move has not convinced the hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees who crossed into Turkey and Iran to return home. Some Kurdish groups have called for international safeguards for the autonomy plan agreed on Wednesday. Mr. Churkin said the Baghdad talks focused on extending the autonomous rights of Iraqi Kurds, adding that the pact would "...facilitate international aid to Kurds and eliminate the need for foreign military contingents in northern regions." Soviet Middle East envoy Yevgeny Primakov said in Paris on Saturday the world should not press for international guarantees to bolster the Baghdad agreement.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية والراي

Volume 16 Number 4688

AMMAN TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 1991, SHAHAW 16, 1411

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Lebanese Forces to surrender arms

BEIRUT (AP) — Peace prospects in Lebanon got a significant boost Monday when the Christians' main militia agreed to surrender its heavy weapons to the army in line with an Arab League-brokered plan to end the civil war. The move by the Lebanese Forces led by Samir Geagea enhanced the prospects of President Elias Hrawi being able to disband the unruly militias who have to a large extent kept the conflict going in recent years.

Storm nears Bangladesh coast

DHAKA (R) — Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia ordered rescue operations and parliament suspended business as a severe cyclone bore down on the Bangladesh coast and offshore islands on Monday, officials said. "Parliament will go on recess for three days so that all members can rush to their constituencies to join rescue and relief work," the prime minister told reporters. "The storm is heading to our coast at a fast speed and is likely to hit by this midnight. If it really strikes, it's going to be a calamity," she added.

Palestinian refugees on hunger strike

COPENHAGEN (R) — Palestinians protesting at plans to send some of them back to Lebanon are staging mass hunger strikes in Denmark, a Red Cross spokesman said Monday. He said a few Palestinians had begun the hunger strike last Tuesday and that this had swelled to 600 by the weekend. About 20 had so far been admitted to hospital for treatment. "The hunger strikers are protesting against a justice ministry decision to send refugees, whose asylum applications are rejected, back to Lebanon."

Government awards Saddam highest honour

NICOSIA (R) — The Iraqi government awarded President Saddam Hussein the country's highest honour Monday in recognition of his "historic role" and "valuable services to Iraq," the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported. "It was a unanimous decision in appreciation of the president's exceptional and historic role and noble services to Iraq," INA quoted Information Minister Hamid Youssef Hammadi as saying after a cabinet meeting.

Morocco unions reject ban on march

RABAT (R) — Morocco's two main opposition unions said on Monday they would go ahead with a Labour Day march in Casablanca despite a ban by city authorities. The Confederation Democratique du Travail (CDT) and the Union Generale des Travailleurs Marocains (UGTM) told a news conference the ban on the May 1 march through a working class and commercial district of the city violated workers' rights.

Afghan rebels claim bombing

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Insurgents said Monday that they set off a bomb in the communication ministry building in Kabul, Afghanistan's capital. Afghanistan's state-run radio monitored in Islamabad made no mention of the bombing, which reportedly occurred Wednesday, according to a guerrilla-run news agency called Midia.

Moscow security forces foil hijack

MOSCOW (R) — Soviet security officers foiled a hijacker at Moscow's Domodedovo airport Monday after he tried to divert an airliner to Reykjavik. TASS reported. The news agency said the hijacker, a 30-year-old man from Barnaul in Siberia, demanded that the jet be refuelled and then flown to Hamburg and on to the Icelandic capital.

Badran urges increased efforts to address Jordan's unemployment problem

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Mudar Badran Monday urged the Labour Ministry to find work for Jordanian job-seekers and to help them get regular jobs to give them incentives to pursue their occupations.

The prime minister underlined the need for offering community college graduates proper training to enable them to take over the work which is most needed for the Jordanian society.

Addressing a meeting held at the Labour Ministry, the prime minister voiced appreciation of the efforts being made to deal with the problems of the Jordanian labour market. He urged Labour Ministry officials to keep strict control over the market with a view to identifying the real requirements of the market prior to providing it with well-trained Jordanians who can gradually replace foreign workers in all fields.

The prime minister said that the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) ought to expand its operations in cooperation with other departments and private sector companies to recruit and train Jordanians needed for the local labour market. Community college graduates, he said, could be trained to do clerical jobs and so they can earn a decent living.

The prime minister noted that housing and hotel management

education courses for instance could be divided into various branches that are of need in Jordan and said that whenever possible people should be employed to work as near as possible to their towns or origins.

The prime minister stressed the need for speedy efforts to finalise work on a new labour law, which, he said, should cater for the needs of the country in view of the industrial development and the growing activities of the labour movement.

Minister of Labour Abdul Karim Al Dughmi briefed the prime minister on the labour market situation in Jordan and said that the labour force is estimated to be around 630,000, of whom 160,000 are non-Jordanians.

But the minister noted that only 23 per cent of the non-Jordanians are working legally in the country. Mr. Dughmi said that a total of 44,618 people applied for jobs at the Civil Service Commission (CSC) last year, of whom only 6.2 per cent were given jobs. He noted that out of 13,979 job seekers who registered with the Ministry of Labour offices 49 per cent were given jobs.

According to Mr. Dughmi, the total number of registered people seeking jobs is estimated at 57,000 of whom 30,000 are returnees from Kuwait and the Gulf.

The estimated unemployed volume of the Jordanian labour forces now stands at 16.8 per cent, he said.

The Labour Ministry, Mr. Dughmi told the meeting, is now intensifying inspection campaigns to ensure that non-Jordanians hold work permits for which they have to pay fees or leave the country and to ensure that they do jobs which no Jordanian substitutes can be found. As a result of these measures, said the minister, a great number of non-Jordanians have now left the country opening the way for Jordanian workers.

Later, the prime minister visited the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and met with Minister Saad Hayel Srouf and his aides to discuss the water situation in the country.

Mr. Badran was told that the Kingdom consumes 730 million cubic metres of water annually of which 175 million is for domestic use.

The growing need of water in Jordan has prompted the ministry to pursue search for new water resources and to build dams to collect water from rain and to benefit from the treated wastewater for irrigating crops, the minister said.

The prime minister also lis-

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Allies seek to prevent Kurdish rebels from blocking refugees' return

ZAKHO (Agencies) — Allied military leaders Monday instructed Iraqi Kurdish guerrillas to stop obstructing Kurdish refugees trying to return home from barren camps on the Turkish border, and said they expected a mass movement of refugees to begin in about two days.

In another development, the United Nations announced it would take its first step Tuesday towards assuming control of the camps for the refugees being built by Western forces in northern Iraq.

U.S. army Major-General Jay M. Garner hosted a meeting at his headquarters in Zakho with about a dozen leaders of the Iraqi Kurdish guerrillas known as the Pesh Merga. British, Dutch and French military officials also attended.

"We asked them (guerrillas) to come in and discuss the return of

their people. A Pesh Merga checkpoint was refusing to let people return," said Gen. Garner.

Officials said the meeting ended successfully. Afterwards, the top guerrilla leader, identified only as "Gen. Ali" was taken by U.S. forces to one of the main checkpoints for the descent from the Isikveren camp on the Turkish border. There, "Gen. Ali" ordered his men to let people pass freely.

The allied forces are building camps in northern Iraq to relocate hundreds of thousands of the Kurdish refugees who fled to the Turkish and Iranian borders from a short-lived Kurdish rebellion.

Another topic at Monday's meeting was two grenade attacks on Iraqi police or suspected collaborators in Zakho over the

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Jordan denies report

AMMAN (J.T.) — An official Jordanian spokesman denied a report published in the Observer newspaper on April 28, 1991 concerning Jordan's contravention of Security Council Resolutions on Iraq.

The spokesman said that there is no truth whatsoever to the report in the paper that Iraq has set up a purchasing operation in Jordan to buy armaments and advanced technology from some Asian countries. The pursuit of such activities, which Iraq has not requested, is prohibited by law and anybody dealing in such activities faces legal prosecution.

Moreover, Jordan has stated on various occasions its scrupulous adherence to Security Council resolutions concerning Iraq. With respect to accusations by

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Iraq says phone service will start

NICOSIA (AP) — Iraq announced Monday that limited telephone service will start on Tuesday for the first time since coalition air forces smashed the communication system in the Gulf war.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) said six switchboards, each with 1,000 lines, would start working Tuesday morning. It was not clear if there would be international service.

The agency said Defence Minister Hussein Kamal had ordered technicians to start to work on Tuesday to restore service to at least seven other provinces.

Mr. Kamal was quoted as saying that most switchboards in most parts of Iraq would be working by the middle of next month.

The multinational forces allied against Iraq in the war for Kuwait targeted most of Iraq's telecommunications system, reducing many telephone centres to burned heaps of twisted metal.

Iraqi officials have been struggling to restore other services demolished by the air war, including electricity and water.

Baghdad has limited electricity and water service and the news agency said power also had been returned to Babil, Karbala, Qadisiya and Wasit provinces.

Egypt accuses Israel of blocking peace efforts

CAIRO (Agencies) — In a two-pronged swipe at Israel, Egypt charged Monday that the Jewish state is trying to abort the Middle East peace efforts of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

Almost simultaneous statements from the Foreign Ministry and from its junior minister said Israel was planting major obstacles before the peace process.

Neither statement mentioned Mr. Baker or the United States by name, but spoke of "current efforts." Mr. Baker has made three tours of the region since mid-March to promote a peace conference where Israel would negotiate a settlement with the Arabs and the Palestinians.

The two statements followed similar weekend criticism by Osama Al Baz, President Hosni Mubarak's top political adviser.

Monday's statements singled out Israel's construction of new settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza, and its position on Palestinian representation at a peace conference.

"The Foreign Ministry has received with much repulsion news of Israeli activity to add more settlements to those already existing in the occupied Palestinian lands," said the ministry statement.

"The ministry holds that this activity basically is aimed at trying to abort the current efforts

to promote a peace settlement and achieve a just solution to the Palestinian problem — the crux of the dispute in the Middle East," it said.

Israel has started two settlements since Mr. Baker began his shuttle diplomacy. The secretary reacted sharply.

The statement indirectly urged the United States to go further. "In the present sensitive conditions...all peace-loving forces in Israel should move to resist this expansionist settlement activity," it said.

"Likewise, all international parties should tell Israel clearly and unequivocally that they reject and condemn its settlement policies, which threaten to obstruct peace efforts and deepen doubts about the Israel government's seriousness in regard to these efforts."

The statement came minutes after speech by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Butros Ghali rapping Israel. Mr. Ghali, the ministry's second man after Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid, spoke at a one-day meeting of the Socialist International's Middle East Committee. The committee groups representatives from socialist parties in 15 countries, including Britain, France, Israel, Germany, Italy,

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King receives Yemeni message Iryani, Masri discuss Arab situation, coordination of Yemeni-Jordanian stands

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday received a message from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh delivered at Al Nadwa Palace by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Iryani.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said the King discussed with the Yemeni official current developments in the Arab arena and issues of common concern to Jordan and Yemen.

The meeting was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Mudar Badran, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, King Hussein's Political Advisor

Adnan Abu Odeh, Chief Chamberlain Prince Raad Ben Zeid, the King's Military Secretary Prince Taji Ben Mohammad and Foreign Minister Taber Al Masri along with Yemen's ambassador to Jordan.

Mr. Iryani and Masri earlier discussed at a separate meeting Jordanian-Yemeni cooperation in various fields.

Petra said the two sides discussed ways to stimulate joint Arab action and to coordinate Yemeni-Jordanian positions at the meetings of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

The two sides emphasised the need to unify Arab efforts in



His Majesty King Hussein Monday receives Yemeni Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Iryani, who delivered to him a message from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh (Petra photo)

serve higher Arab national goals. Mr. Iryani, who arrived Monday on a two-day official visit, told reporters that the difficult circumstances through which the Arab Nation has passed over the past months required close coordination among Arab leaders to deal with the coming stage.

He said his visit to Jordan and other Arab countries comes in the course of Yemen's efforts to achieve Arab solidarity.

Jordan receiving Iraqi oil

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan has started receiving Iraqi oil in limited quantities after a two-and-a-half-month break, signalling the possible resumption of Iraqi oil supply to the Kingdom in lieu of Baghdad's debts to Amman, industry and other sources said Monday.

The sources said the national refinery at Zarqa has been receiving an average of 2,750 tonnes of crude oil a day since April 22, but it was not immediately clear whether the quantity — representing about one-third of Jordan's pre-war daily consumption — was set as a daily supply from Iraq.

No official statement from the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources was immediately available but informed sources confirmed the arrival of oil shipments.

"All indications are that Jordan would continue to receive this quantity on a daily basis for some time before the supply would be restored to the pre-crisis level," said an industry source.

According to this source, the tankers are loaded from Iraq's oil facilities at Al Qaim, about 500 kilometres from the border. The first shipment came after several weeks of waiting there pending repairs to damages caused at the U.S.-led forces in the Gulf war which ended in February.

"Repairs are continuing there and it will be several weeks before the facilities would be almost 70 per cent functional," added the source, insisting on anonymity.

Iraqi technicians and engineers are working round the clock, but it is doubtful that the facility could be fully functional without some of the vital spare parts," the source said.

The Iraqi resumption of oil supply to Jordan will offer a major economic break to the Kingdom, which has been drawing from its foreign exchange reserves to pay in cash for oil imports from Syria and Yemen to make up for the shortfall created by the suspension in Iraqi shipments in early February.

Despite the international embargo imposed against Iraq for its Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait, Jordan continued to get Iraqi oil until February, when damages caused to Iraqi oil facilities in allied bombardment and repeated bombings of Jordanian tankers carrying Iraqi oil forced the suspension.

Jordan, which had informed the U.N. Sanctions Committee of the import of Iraqi oil, rejected charges that the Iraqi supply constituted a violation

Impact of Gulf war prolonged, poses challenge — Crown Prince

●Jordan can contribute to developing democracy

●Baker's efforts represent a 'bold initiative'

AMMAN (J.T.) — The imbalances created by the Gulf war are going to continue to affect the Middle East for a long time, posing a challenge for the countries of the region, particularly between the haves and have-nots, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said Monday.

The situation could worsen if the international community continues to look at the Middle East's oil resources and stays away from addressing the issue of the people of the region, the Crown Prince told National Public Radio (NPR) of the United States in an interview conducted by Mara Laisson.

In the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Crown Prince described

as a "very bold initiative" the efforts undertaken by the Bush administration through Secretary of State James Baker to resolve the problem.

"There is still the bitterness over the intifada, over the fact that the Palestine question has not received the international attention it deserves," he said. "But I think, on the other hand, one has to say clearly that the secretary of state deserves recognition and credit for having taken what is a very bold initiative at a difficult time to try to bring the parties to the negotiating table; so, one hopes that this window of opportunity which really can't be more than a calendar year March 91, to March 92, will result in returning of that corner."

The Crown Prince said Jordan could contribute positively to the development of democracy in the region.

"The path of democracy and participation is one that His Majesty King Hussein can encourage much more effectively and credibly, i.e., building the institutions of democracy is the course ahead," he said. In that sense, I think that Jordan can contribute a model of security to the region; this was not possible in the past. But, of course once again, Jordan has to be taken seriously."

The Crown Prince said the democratisation process in Jordan had unfortunately led to polarisation in the Kingdom. "Democracy did not say that all branches of government, and,

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Syria, Iran agree on Hizbollah presence, renew oil agreement

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani ended his visit here Monday having worked around a Syrian-backed directive that would have forced the Iranian-backed Hizbollah militia in Lebanon to give up its arms.

Mr. Rafsanjani, making his first overseas trip since being elected president in 1989, left for a three-day visit to Turkey.

He told a press conference before his departure that the two sides were in agreement on all issues, saying, "don't believe anything being written about any differences between us."

Sources close to the Iranian delegation told the AP in Mr. Rafsanjani's talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, it was agreed the Hizbollah militia

would continue to function in the Bekaa Valley, across the Syrian border, and in South Lebanon, near an Israeli-controlled enclave.

The pro-Iranian Shiite fundamentalists are believed to be holding most of the 13 Western hostages in Lebanon.

Iran's contingent of some 3,000 Revolutionary Guards, stationed in Baslebek and used to arm and train will also be allowed to remain, the sources said.

Under an Arab League peace plan to end Lebanon's 16-year civil war, all militias have been ordered to disarm by Tuesday.

But an ex-Revolutionary Guard, part of Mr. Rafsanjani's team, said the Syrians would never disarm Hizbollah until Israeli forces remained in South Lebanon.

He said the Syrians could be sure of the pro-Iranians support in any conflict with Israel.

The directive had worried Iran, which exercises its influence in Lebanon through loyal militants and the Revolutionary Guards.

The sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Iranians, usually intransigent over any negotiations for an Arab-Israeli peace, had raised no objections over Syrian discussions with Washington to bring peace to the region.

Mr. Rafsanjani ended his visit Sunday with a two-hour meeting with Mr. Assad, which was also attended by Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati and his Syrian counterpart Farouq Al Sharaa.

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Dole: U.S. may review aid if Mideast peace fails

WASHINGTON (R) — Senate Republican leader Bob Dole said Sunday that the United States might have to review its aid to the Middle East if countries there did not agree to hold Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Mr. Dole made the remarks following U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's latest effort to convene a regional conference. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir rejected Mr. Baker's idea of an open-ended conference. Saudi Arabia also said it would not take part in such a conference.

Mr. Dole said on a television news programme that Middle East states should take advantage of the window for a peace settlement opened by the end of the Gulf war.

He said: "This is the best shot we've had, and if everybody says 'oh, we don't care to deal this way, or this way,' then I think the United States might take a look at our foreign aid policies and a lot of other policies."

He did not elaborate. Mr. Shamir said before an Israeli cabinet meeting "we are opposed to that (an open-ended, regional conference) because, if there are subsequent sessions of the same meeting or conference, we'll never get to direct negotiations."

He was apparently trying to calm far-right members of his coalition furious over Foreign Minister David Levy's agreement Friday with Mr. Baker that a

conference might reconvene periodically. Under Mr. Levy's proposal, reconvening would require the support of every participant, including Israel.

Mr. Shamir also said Arab countries backed the U.S. proposal to avoid direct talks with Israel.

U.S. aid to Israel is about \$3 billion a year. President George Bush recently cancelled about \$7 billion in Egyptian foreign debt and the United States has long been a big arms salesman to the area.

On another television news programme, Israeli Housing Minister Ariel Sharon said he would hope that Jewish settlements being put up in occupied territories would not lead to a cutoff in U.S. aid.

Mr. Sharon added that housing erected during Mr. Baker's visit were not meant as a slap and that Israel would continue to build new settlements.

He said the settlements should not be viewed as rejecting the idea of ending the war in return for peace and that the settlements would give Israel the "security" it needed to be able to move towards peace.

Mr. Sharon said the settlements were an integral part of Israel's "strategic needs" and that they increased its confidence.

"And if Israel will have confidence, no doubt that Israel will be more daring to move towards peace," Mr. Sharon said.

Gulf ministers to discuss security, ties with Iran

RIYADH (R) — Foreign ministers of the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council will meet in Kuwait on Sunday to discuss post-Gulf war security and relations with Iran, GCC officials said Monday.

The GCC ministers had been scheduled to meet in Kuwait on Tuesday but the talks were postponed. No reason was given.

The GCC, an economic and political alliance formed five months after the outbreak of the Iraq-Iran war in September 1980, groups Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

Officials at GCC headquarters in Riyadh said security in the Gulf region would top the ministers' agenda. They would also discuss their relations with non-Arab-Iran which is seeking a role in regional security arrangements.

Relations between Tehran and the six Gulf Arab states, which backed Iraq in the war with Iran, have been improving since Iraq

forces invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2. The GCC took part in the U.S.-led alliance which fought Iraq in the Gulf war in February.

Tehran reaped goodwill by maintaining neutrality in the Gulf war and recently restored relations with Saudi Arabia.

Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was winding up a visit to Syria for talks with President Hafez Al Assad whose troops helped in the liberation of Kuwait.

Syria called on Sunday for an Iranian role in the security arrangements in the Gulf.

Kuwait's Foreign Ministry under-secretary, Sulaiman Al Shabien, said Friday GCC ministers would discuss post-Gulf war security arrangements and a Kuwaiti proposal to invite Western troops, and possibly Iran, to participate.

"The new world order requires a broad security arrangements in which there is a responsibility for regional states with the cooperation with friendly states," he said.

Algerian paper fears U.S. air strike on nuclear plant

ALGIERS (AP) — An Algerian newspaper has expressed fear that the United States may launch an air strike against a secret nuclear plant that allegedly may be developing atomic weapons.

The independent newspaper Le Soir carried a front-page commentary that compared the allegations against the country to the run-up to the Gulf war.

"This affair is becoming serious, and all the ingredients are there for a scenario that adds up to a veritable campaign against Algeria, initiated by the CIA and relayed by the American and British media," the newspaper said.

The Washington Post and the Sunday Times of London have reported that China has helped Algeria build a nuclear reactor that may be capable of producing atomic weapons. Both countries have denied it.

The reactor is said to be too large power, but the right to produce power, but the right size to

make weapons-grade plutonium. The Sunday Times reported this week that Britain's military attacks was expelled from Algeria earlier this month after photographing the plant. The newspaper said the facility is in the Atlas Mountains about 270 kilometres south of Algiers, near an air base at Ain Oussera.

A British Foreign Office spokesman said that the diplomat, Group Captain William Cross, was withdrawn for "operational reasons" and refused to say whether he had been spying.

Le Soir remarked on the expulsion: "Fortunately, there still exists in this country services capable of stopping a diplomat-spy 300 kilometres from the capital."

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) told congressional intelligence committees earlier this year that China was assisting Algeria in designing a nuclear warhead for missiles, the Sunday Times reported. The article cited no sources.

Baker's criticism of Israel distresses Haig

WASHINGTON (AP) — The criticism U.S. Secretary of State James Baker directed at Israel last week at a news conference in Syria drew a rare rebuke from a predecessor, Alexander M. Haig Jr.

"I was appalled to see our secretary of state condemn Israel, from a platform in Damascus," Mr. Haig said in a panel discussion last Sunday at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Mr. Haig, who was former President Ronald Reagan's first secretary of state, also questioned President George Bush's formula for a settlement.

"I never believed in 'territory for peace,'" Haig said. "Whose territory? Whose peace?"

He predicted the administration's effort to set up Arab-Israeli peace talks would not succeed. "I don't see anything coming out of this, and I don't think President Bush is going to engage himself in this process," Mr. Haig said.

The parties have not reached the point where they are ready, on their own, to negotiate a settlement, Mr. Haig said, and the Middle East remains volatile despite the end of the Gulf war.

Former President Jimmy Carter succeeded at Camp David in 1978 in steering Egypt and Israel into the peace treaty they signed the next year because the countries were ready to make peace, Mr. Haig said.

Mr. Baker and other U.S. officials, in pushing for peace talks, portrayed the Middle East as vastly changed after the Gulf war. The situation, according to Mr. Baker, created "a window of opportunity" for Israel and the Arabs to make peace and for the Palestinian question to be addressed.

However, Mr. Baker wound up his visit to the area in seven weeks Friday night with a statement suggesting the administration might abandon the drive unless Israel responds to his questions about sponsorship of the peace talks and other issues.

The Arabs want the United Nations to play a major role. The Israeli government is resisting. Another gap is who would represent the Palestinians in the negotiations.

In Damascus last Wednesday, Mr. Baker publicly criticised Israel for moving to establish a new settlement on the West Bank.

Truck explodes at U.N. headquarters in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies) — A Kuwaiti military truck loaded with ammunition exploded Monday at the hotel housing United Nations peacekeepers, gutting a dozen vehicles and sending the soldiers scurrying for cover.

The truck burst into a fireball and touched off explosions that lasted for almost 30 minutes at the U.N. mission monitoring the Iraq-Kuwait border.

"The flames shot 10 metres into the air. Then there were lots of small explosions like someone firing a machine gun," said Ole Walberg of the Norwegian news agency. "Later on, there were some bigger explosions."

Majed Fayad, spokesman for the U.N. peacekeepers, said he was not aware of any injuries. Wary of additional explosions, firefighters waited an hour before extinguishing the burning truck. About a dozen nearby vehicles, many belonging to the United Nations, were completely burned out.

Some 25 U.N. soldiers were sitting on a patio about 50 metres from the truck when it exploded, said Mr. Walberg.

"There was a lot of confusion. People were running in all directions," he said. "Finally, everyone ran and dived behind the corner of the building."

Shell casings littered the pavement outside the hotel, which is on the Gulf headfront.

Mr. Fayad said the Kuwaiti military truck apparently came to the hotel to collect additional ordnance that had been found in the area. The cause of the explosion was not known, he said.

During its occupation of Kuwait, Iraqi soldiers mined the beach near the hotel and set-up anti-aircraft position. Trenches on the beach near the hotel were full of ammunition left by Iraqis when they fled the emirate at the end of February.

"We are always recovering some leftover ammunition," said Mr. Fayad.

The Iraqis burned the main

SAS hotel building before they left Kuwait, and it remains empty. But the hotel has reopened some of its adjacent bungalows, almost all of which are reserved for U.N. soldiers, including the head of the mission, Austrian Major-General Gunther Greindl.

Monday's incident marked the third time in recent weeks that ordnance under the control of Kuwait security forces has touched off large explosions and fires. The two other blasts occurred at police stations.

Clearing the mines of Kuwait's beaches and oilfields will take up to 18 months, the emirate's new defence minister said in his first interview since taking office.

Sheikh Ali Sabah Al Salem Al Sabah also told the official Kuwaiti News Agency (KUNA) in the interview released Monday that Kuwait would review the make-up of its army and planned to acquire sophisticated arms technology to compensate for its shortage of manpower.

The emirate had population of 700,000 Kuwaitis and twice as many expatriates before the Iraqi invasion last August.

Most of the population fled and has not returned. Sheikh Ali said the emirate would continue its training programmes so that it was better prepared to defend itself.

Sheikh Ali said Kuwait faced a huge task in erasing the traces of Iraqi occupation.

He said most residential area were now clear of mines but it would take a year to 18 months to clear Kuwait completely.

The government that took office on April 20 was giving priority to removing mines from oilfields to allow firefighters to work safely. The coast would be cleared of mines in three to four months, the minister said.

He said huge ammunition depots left behind by the Iraqis would take two to four months to clear. Some 17 trucks were needed for just one depot.

Bombs explode in Istanbul and Adana, no one hurt

ISTANBUL (Agencies) — Four bombs exploded in Istanbul and three went off in the southeastern city of Adana during the night, causing damage but no injuries, in the latest in a series of attacks aimed mainly at banks and private companies.

Anatolian news agency said Monday an unidentified caller told newspapers the underground group Dev-Sol (Revolutionary Left) was behind the Istanbul blasts. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the Adana explosion.

The semi-official agency said

buildings were damaged but no one was hurt in the blasts, which all occurred at about 9.30 p.m. (1930 GMT) on Sunday.

Adana branches of the private Akbank and IS Bank and the state-run Ziraat Bank were bombed.

In Istanbul, bombs went off outside offices of the ruling Motherland Party in the Uskudar and Kagithane districts, a shop owned by U.S. firm General Electric Co in Caddesbostan and a car dealership run by the private Boronkay firm in Besiktas.

Turkish first lady wins Istanbul party post

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkey's cigar-smoking First Lady Semra Ozal has formally entered politics, winning leadership of the ruling Motherland Party's Istanbul branch — from where she could theoretically run to head the whole party.

The semi-official Anatolian news agency said President Turgut Ozal's wife, a dynamic grandmother with a stylish wardrobe and a taste for whisky and antique guns, won 351 of the 646 votes cast. Her rival was conservative candidate Talat Yilmaz.

"Hand in hand, in full unity we will serve our beautiful Istanbul, our party and our country," Mrs. Ozal told reporters after the poll, describing it as a "sweet family contest."

Motherland sources said the real ambition of the president's 56-year-old wife was to become mayor of Istanbul, a traditionally conservative stronghold.

The daughter of a ship welder, she was a typist when she married Turgut Ozal in 1954.

"Well, I fought against the state but that was all I could do," Semra's rival Yilmaz told reporters afterwards.

The first poll, on March 4, was postponed after the party meeting dissolved into chaos with fist-fights and scuffles among delegates.

The first lady's bid formally to enter politics caused an outburst of indignation in the Motherland Party. Mr. Ozal in February fired his own cousin, Defence Minister Husnu Dogan, for opposing her candidacy.

Also campaigning against her were Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu and state ministers Mehmet Kecekiler and Cemil Cicek.

Motherland sources said Mr. Ozal, in theory above party politics, was using his wife's candidacy to shackle the power of religious and nationalist conservatives in Motherland.

They said that from the Istanbul post, Semra could in theory contest the party leadership with Prime Minister Yildirim Akbulut at Motherland's long-postponed national convention, earlier set for April.

The prospect of husband and wife occupying the top two ranks of Turkish politics has heightened charges of dynastic efforts in the Ozal family.

Turkish cartoonists have had a field day with the family, and like to draw Ozal in robes as an Ottoman ruler.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Government forces control Somali town

NAIROBI (AP) — Forces loyal to Somalia's interim government control the southern coastal town of Kismayu, contrary to opposition claims, a recent visitor said Monday. The traveller, a Westerner who visited Kismayu Thursday, confirmed the claim by the interim government of the United Somali (USC) Congress which said its forces seized the Indian Ocean-front town last Tuesday. The traveller, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said there was evidence of heavy fighting about 20 to 50 kilometres north of the town and that dozens of corpses lay strewn near the roadside. Fighting apparently did not reach Kismayu, but supplies of food, good water and medicine were desperately low there, said the traveller. Kismayu's population has swollen to about 10 times its size with many people who fled heavy fighting in the capital, Mogadishu, in January. Its population currently is estimated at about 500,000 people.

Iran's forces fight drug caravan

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian narcotics agents fought a two-day gunbattle with heavily-armed drug caravans and brought in the air force to help crush the smugglers, Tehran Radio said Sunday. Iranian security forces, tracking the drug-runners for nearly a week, killed or wounded 25 of them during fighting in a remote southeastern area. The rest fled, leaving behind 500 kg of narcotics. The radio said a security officer told a news conference on Sunday that the operation ran from last Sunday to Friday. The caravan, manned by tribal people, were fleeing through the province of Baluchistan and Sistan, near the Pakistani and Afghan borders, when the agents struck. The smugglers fought back and held off the narcotics agents for two days, the radio quoted the official as saying. He gave no details of the air force involvement.

Iraq returns Kuwaitis, Bangladeshi

RIYADH (R) — Iraq handed over 16 Kuwaitis and one Bangladeshi to Saudi border authorities Sunday, a spokesman for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said. Iraq has returned nearly 6,700 Kuwaiti detainees as part of a ceasefire agreement reached between allied and Iraqi military officials. Kuwaiti authorities have given Iraqi officials lists of 5,000 missing citizens they believe are still in Iraq, but Baghdad says it has no record of this number. Military officials from both sides were due to meet in Riyadh Monday to discuss the exchange of remaining prisoners and missing people.

Algiers court jails 7 over concert protest

ALGIERS (R) — An Algiers court sentenced seven Muslim fundamentalists to terms of three to six months in prison Sunday for having tried to disrupt a Berber music concert during the fasting month of Ramadan, lawyers said. One of those convicted received a six-month sentence and the other six got three months apiece. Three others were acquitted. During Ramadan, a month of daylight fasting and abstinence which ended in mid-April, Islamic fundamentalists had waged a campaign against concerts which they said were "detrimental to the moral health of Muslims."

Iran paper urges return of U.S. aid

TEHRAN (R) — A radical Iranian newspaper urged the government Monday to send back U.S.-supplied clothes and blankets for Iraqi refugees, saying the donation was likely to be infested with the AIDS virus and other deadly germs. The daily Jomhuri Eslami attacked the United States for having sent what it said was a planload of second-hand items. "These materials are problematic and therefore it cannot be ruled out that they have to be destroyed. There is a strong possibility that they are infested with deadly viruses including AIDS," the paper said. It said the government should send back the supplies which totalled 17.5 tonnes, a U.S. plane, carrying relief supplies for the Iraqi refugees, landed in Tehran Saturday. The U.S. State Department said it carried a large cargo of blankets.

SLA offers pay raises to reluctant recruits

TEL AVIV (AP) — The commander of the Israeli-backed militia in South Lebanon plans to boost salaries by 25 per cent to combat dwindling recruitment, informed sources said Monday. They said General Antoine Lahad also hopes to offer health care benefits and a pension plan to draw villagers to his 2,500-man South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia. One source — who insisted on anonymity, like others agreeing to discuss the militia — said the formal decision to raise salaries is pending approval from Israel's defence ministry, which trains and finances the militia. Israeli Radio said the salaries for new recruits would now be about \$200 a month, more than the average wage in the region. Israeli sources said the militia was having trouble getting recruits because of increasing dangers to its soldiers. Just last week, three SLA gunmen were killed in two roadside bomb blasts.

Sudan releases all political prisoners

KHARTOUM (AP) — Sudan's military junta announced Monday that it was releasing all of the country's political prisoners. Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Al Bashir did not specify how many people were involved. But the chief justice, Galal Al Luty, told Egypt's Middle East News Agency (MENA) around 100 people are detained in Sudanese prisons on political grounds. Gen. Bashir led a military coup June 30, 1989, that overthrew the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi. International human rights organisations have accused the military regime of committing human rights abuses like jailing and torturing hundreds of political opponents. Political leaders including Mr. Mahdi were imprisoned for a while and remained under house arrest after being released. It was unclear if Gen. Bashir's announcement will affect Mr. Mahdi's status. The general made his announcement at the start of a three-day conference expected to lay the foundation of a political organisation in Sudan based on Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's concept of "people's congresses." Gen. Bashir dissolved political parties and the elected parliament when he came to power and has not replaced them.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Les Raisons Laveurs
18:30 Sincere Canche
19:00 News in French
19:15 Aujourd'hui en Jordanie
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 News in Arabic
21:00 Doc. "Coteau"
21:30 News in English
22:30 French feature film

PRAYER TIMES

04:22 Fajr
05:47 (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:33 Dhuhr
16:12 'Asr
19:19 Maghreb
20:44 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Swidish Tel. 810740.
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785, 655526.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terzavista Church Tel. 623466
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.

Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 625453.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772621.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

American International Church Tel. 683326.

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932.

Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Unstable weather conditions will prevail. Thus it will be cloudy with a chance for scattered showers of rain and a remarkable drop in temperatures will occur. Winds will be westerly moderate, causing dust in desert areas. In Amman, winds will be southerly fresh and less rough.

Min./max. temp.
Amman 15 / 25

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Aqaba 22 / 34

Deserts 16 / 29

Jordan Valley 20 / 33

Yesterday's high temperature: Amman 34, Aqaba 37. Humidity readings: Amman 30 per cent, Aqaba 18 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Mohammad Al Shawish 688878

Dr. Abdul Aziz Tabbara 785708

Dr. Fakher Bilal 664112

Dr. Walid Al Mousa 675483

First Pharmacy 661912

First Pharmacy 778336

Al Azzam pharmacy 697055

Naturopharmacy 626372

Al Salem pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Stomach pharmacy 637660

AMMAN:

Dr. Abdul Aziz Tabbara 785708

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First Pharmacy 778336

Al Azzam pharmacy 697055

Naturopharmacy 626372

Al Salem pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Stomach pharmacy 637660

Dr. Ziad Al Bakri (—)

Al Shams pharmacy (278825)

ZARQA:

Dr. Salah Salsal (—)

Khalifa pharmacy 985477

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 697111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 630341

Rescue 199

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 891228

Blood Bank 77121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 68022

Hotel Complaints 626800

Prison Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality 787111

Complaints 787111

Telephone Information 787111

Telephone Information 787111

Telephone Information 78

Human Appeal aids returnees

AMMAN (J.T.) — Human Appeal in cooperation with World Vision Organisation carried out during the last month an aid and assistance programme for the returnees to Jordan from Kuwait and other Gulf areas, those who lost their jobs as a result of the Gulf crisis.

This programme included giving foodstuff and other house materials that would be sufficient for a month. This programme covered many areas in Jordan, the distribution was held in Zarqa Governorate and in Amman Governorate (Al Wehdat, Al Yaddah, Khirbet Al Souq and Suwayli).

On Saturday, assistance was given in northern Jordan (Irbid Governorate) to those hurt from the last events.

Execution of the programme was held under the supervision of Human Appeal Jordan Office's regional manager in cooperation with the World Vision Organisation's Jordan representative.

World Vision Organisation is one of the international organisations working in the fields of aid and charity work in many areas of the world.

This programme comes as a primary step from Human Appeal in the field of assisting the returnees, where Human Appeal hopes within the coming period to start putting its programmes and plans for the aid and rehabilitation of the returnees in cooperation with many international and local organisations.

Human Appeal sent two previous appeals for assisting and succouring the returnees in cooperation with different international organisations, where Human Appeal primary numbers show that more than 20,000 poor families are in very great need for support and assistance as a result of the tragic conditions they are going through.



Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Monday presents certificates to leaders of scouts and guides who offered voluntary services to evacuees and to needy families during the month of Ramadan (Petra photo)

Princess Basma, scouts, guides review last year's activities

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Monday attended a meeting of the General Assembly of the Jordanian Scouts and Girl Guides Society at Al Hussein Youth City, and heard reports about the society's activities and operations over the past year.

The Princess, who is the society's president, was told that the society now grouped 40,000 members living in various parts of the country.

Princess Basma paid tribute to the scouts and guides for their efforts under the difficult circumstances in Jordan during the Gulf crisis; she particularly lauded their services at the evacuation camps.

The scout movement in Jordan, she said, has an important role to play under all circumstances and conditions. The Princess noted that scouts and guides had organised groups to carry out civil defence work, voluntary services, and other activities during the past crisis.

She expressed hope that the society would continue its cooperation with local organisations to serve the country which is facing immense challenges.

At the end of the meeting, the Princess distributed meritorious certificates to the leaders of scouts and guides who had

offered voluntary services to the evacuees in the camps. She also presented Mr. Hassan Dubian, the society's former secretary general, with a token gift in recognition of his valuable efforts and services.

Later, nearly 1,500 scouts and guides from the Amman region, who offered voluntary services in various fields, met the Princess for an exchange of views about voluntary work.

The Princess distributed meritorious certificates to those who offered distinguished services, during the month of Ramadan, especially to the needy Jordanian families.

Ministry of Awqaf official in Saudi Arabia to make arrangements for pilgrimage

AMMAN (J.T.) — Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Secretary General Ahmad Helayel has gone to Saudi Arabia to pave the way for pilgrims from Jordan and the occupied territories to perform this year's pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina.

Mr. Helayel, the first high ranking Jordanian official to go to Saudi Arabia since the Gulf crisis erupted last year, is expected to discuss with his Saudi counterpart, Sheikh Abdul Wahhab Abdul Wasee, and other officials arrangements for housing the pilgrims from Jordan and Palestine.

Mr. Helayel said in a statement before leaving Monday that he would visit Mecca and Medina and would meet with Saudi company officials who cater to the transportation and housing needs of the pilgrims.

The pilgrimage (Al Haj) is considered one of the five basic duties of Islam and should be performed by every Muslim at least once in his lifetime if he has the means to do it.

In the past year, some 15,000 Jordanians and Palestinians from the occupied territories used to perform the pilgrimage, which precedes Al Adha (sacrifice).

Feast yearly. This year the feast is expected towards the middle of June.

Earlier this month Mr. Helayel met with a special committee formed by his ministry to undertake the task of transporting the pilgrims to and from Mecca and Medina and ensure accommodation in the holy places.

Mr. Helayel voiced satisfaction with the close cooperation between the ministries of Awqaf in Jordan and Saudi Arabia and underlined the need for all Arab and Islamic countries to open a new chapter in brotherly relations based on mutual trust and respect to safeguard the higher national interests.

Earlier, officials at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs said that the Jordanian government had given the pilgrims clearance to perform the Haj this year. But no registration of pilgrims has yet begun.

Jordan calls on U.N. to implement development projects in occupied Arab territories

HARARE (Petra) — Jordan has called on the United Nations to implement housing and various other development projects in the Israeli-held Arab territories in order to help raise the standards of living of the Palestinian people and alleviate their suffering.

Jordan's representative at a U.N.-sponsored meeting here said that the United Nations centre for human settlements (UNCHS) should take into account, in its programmes, special plans to meet the housing needs of the oppressed Palestinians under Israeli occupation.

Yousef Hiyasat, director of the Housing Corporation, who is representing Jordan at the UNCHS's 13th meeting in Harare, referred in his address to Israel's arbitrary actions, like administrative arrests, closure of schools and universities, building of Jewish settlements on Arab-owned land and eviction of Arabs from their homes.

Referring to Jordan's housing strategy, Mr. Hiyasat said that the Kingdom had embarked on the implementation of a national housing strategy which is closely linked to the socio-economic development schemes in Jordan.

He said that the government was now introducing legislations to offer further facilities for people taking loans for building homes and was currently studying the population's needs of housing units in cooperation with the private sector.

Mr. Hiyasat called on the UNCHS executive director to implement an earlier decision of establishing a regional centre in Jordan, and said that the Jordanian government had granted this project every possible facility.

"Work on the project is at a standstill despite the Arab region's needs of housing services," Mr. Hiyasat said.

Mr. Hiyasat urged the orga-

nisation to carry out short-term projects to help carry out reconstruction projects in Kuwait and Iraq and to help homeless people find decent shelters after having suffered the negative consequence of the Gulf war.

The meeting in Harare, which opened Monday, will last two weeks during which participants expected to discuss sustainable development schemes which include housing, improved standards of living for poor societies, planning and managing settlements, U.N. utilisation of energy resources and an international housing strategy until the year 2000.

Jordan to attend WHO meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan is taking part in the 44th meeting of the World Health Organisation (WHO) General Assembly which is due to open in Geneva, on May 5, at the health ministers' level.

Discussions at the two-week annual meeting will deal with general health conditions around the world, ways to combat the killing disease AIDS, a report on the role of women and in promoting health and the effects of the Chernobyl nuclear plant more than five years after the incident.

According to Minister of Health Adnan Al Jaljoui, who will represent Jordan at the meeting, the general health conditions in the Israeli-held Arab territories and medical aid to Lebanon will be among the main topics for discussion.

Mr. Jaljoui is leaving Amman for the meeting on Saturday.

In a statement to Al Ra'i Arabic daily Sunday, Mr. Jaljoui announced that all contracts of foreign nurses employed by the government in the Kingdom would not be renewed once they have expired.

The health minister was quoted as saying that foreign nurses were brought into the country when there was real need for them to meet the local needs of hospitals.

His move came in the wake of a general meeting held at the Professional Association Complex in Amman, earlier this month, to discuss the question of foreign nurses employed in the country.

Jordanian nurses complained that the government had allowed more than 1,000 foreign nurses to be employed in the country's public and private sector, and that the foreign nurses were preventing the local nurses from getting employment.

Jordan at present has three nursing colleges turning out nurses and midwives and two nursing faculties at the University of Jordan and the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST).

Yousef Khalil, Nurses Association president, welcomed Mr. Jaljoui's decision and expressed hope that private hospitals would follow the ministry of health's example.

Masaadeh suspends axial weights law

AMMAN (J.T.) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Salem Masaadeh announced Monday that trucks operating within Jordan do not have to abide by regulations provided by the law on axial weights as issued by the Ministry of Public Works.

The minister said that this exemption would be enforced only until May 15, but gave no explanation for the new order.

Earlier, the Ministry of Public Works said that trucks were to adhere to the regulation which limits the amount of weight to be loaded on trucks operating in Jordan as heavy weights were causing severe damage to the road network in the country.

Another reason given for limiting the weights on the roads was to give the chance to a bigger number of trucks lying idle to operate.

The Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) Director General Wasef Azar earlier this month complained that the new

enforcement of the axial weights law was detrimental to the transportation of phosphate from the mines in southern Jordan to Aqaba for export.

Mr. Azar said he had submitted a memorandum to the government explaining the dilemma and asking that special arrangements be made for the transportation of phosphate, which, in 1989, earned the Kingdom more than JD 100 million.

The transportation of phosphate is directly affected by the law because it is mostly done by trucks which can only take on 28 tonnes each, down from 50 tonnes before the application of the law, according to a JPMC annual report.

Mr. Masaadeh's order temporarily suspends the axial weights law which came into force on Jan. 8, 1991.

JPMC last year reported a decline in its sales and profits largely due to the Gulf crisis, according to the annual report.

Yarmouk to teach political sciences

IRBID (Petra) — Yarmouk University will embark on teaching a four-year political sciences programme as of the beginning of next scholastic year.

The council of deans at the university asked the dean of the Faculty of Arts in a meeting held Saturday to prepare a course plan to fulfil the requirements of the Bachelors Degree in political sciences.

Badran calls for efforts

(Continued from page 1)

tened to a detailed briefing on the repair work going on in the southern parts of the country which were hit by a rain storm recently causing extensive damage to public and private property.

The prime minister learned that the total cost to rebuild the canals and to reintroduce life to various projects was estimated at JD 2 million.

Addressing the meeting, Mr. Badran stressed that the water question has the first priority after national security and defence because water is a life or death issue.

He voiced appreciation to the ministry's efforts to repair damage in the south and urged the officials to try to use water very sensibly and wisely and to take

extra care to ensure the safety of treated water flowing to King Talal Dam, and ensure that it is not affected by industrial pollution and that factories should adhere to laws and legislations concerning dumping of waste in the Zarqa River which flows towards the dam.

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation should bear the first responsibility for any pollution in the water resources and the government will ensure full cooperation from the ministries of industry and trade and the National Committee for Public Safety to help the ministry achieve that goal, the prime minister said.

The prime minister urged the ministry to execute the water distribution programme with fairness and to ensure that the networks are working properly to avoid loss of the precious water.

Allies seek to block rebels

(Continued from page 1)

previous 72 hours. Allied authorities had allowed a small group of local police remain in Zakho after asking the Iraqi military to withdraw.

"We established conditions that if they go into the camp, they're going without arms," Gen. Garner said. He also said no civilians or guerrillas would be allowed to display arms in the city of Zakho.

Jordan denies report

(Continued from page 1)

The Observer that banking arrangements to get round the U.N. embargo are already in place, the spokesman stated that the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) has informed all its correspondent banks that it will not accept in its accounts any amounts to be credited to any Iraqi party, requesting these correspondents to act accordingly and that only transfers which have received prior written approval from the U.N. Sanctions Committee will be credited.

Some transfers in the early days of August were credited to the Central Bank of Jordan, which considered these transfers to be in settlement of outstanding Iraqi debt. All transfers received by the CBJ did not exceed \$50 million. The U.N. Security Coun-

cil Sanctions Committee as well as other monetary authorities of permanent Security Council members were promptly advised about these transfers and were kept fully informed on subsequent developments.

The official spokesman confirmed that only food items, medical supplies and humanitarian needs permitted under Security Council resolutions are exported to Iraq, while Jordan imports some of its oil needs from Iraq and has communicated with the U.N. Sanctions Committee about these imports.

The official spokesman expressed its regret to such accusations which could not be further from the truth. It seems that some parties with an ax to grind have been planting false reports and rumours about Jordan.

Diodorus says miracle happened in Zarqa church

By Jane Arraf
Reuters

ONE OF the Greek Orthodox Church's highest authorities has declared a miracle after priests said communion bread began spouting blood at a Jordanian church last week.

"There is no other explanation — it's a miracle," the Patriarch of Jerusalem Diodoros I told Reuters after arriving in Jordan to investigate.

The 68-year-old patriarch, his long white beard flowing over burgundy robes, said on Sunday a priest was preparing communion in the working class city of Zarqa, near Amman, on April 21, when blood appeared to pour from the bread, spilling into the brass holder.

The priest's screams prompted a rush of worshippers to the altar. "They started daubing it on their faces and eating it," said the mother superior of a local convent school. "You couldn't control them any more." Bishop Constantinos of Jordan said, gazing at the brass plate holding a small silver box containing two cubes of moist-looking, bright red bread — all that was left.

Christians believe the bread and wine consecrated at the



Patriarch Diodoros communion ceremony represent the body and blood of Christ.

Church officials said a devout local man who had been bed-ridden for a year threw off his oxygen mask and sprang out of bed when the Zarqa priest spoke his name during the mass.

"I saw him — he was sick in bed and about to die," said a priest in Amman who visited him. "When the miracle happened, he got out of bed and told his wife to get him his jacket because something had happened at the church."

Bishop Constantinos said the priest in Zarqa was a "very good and very simple" man, in his mid-50s, whose wife had died a year earlier, leaving him with several children.

The bishop, who oversees the 120,000-strong community in Jordan, the country's largest Christian community, said the bread looked exactly as it had after the service more than a week ago.

"It doesn't look like bread any more, it looks like meat," the patriarch said.

Another priest said wine could also have produced changes in texture and colour. "One cannot explain why it happened," the bishop said. "It may be some kind of warning that tells us we have strayed too far from religion."

"Sometimes we become too superficial," he said, standing on the steps of a towering new church built last year in Amman's wealthiest neighbourhood.

Church officials said they had accepted the transformation as a miracle and would not subject it to scientific testing.

The patriarch, seated in a red velvet chair and holding a silver-tipped cane, said he was taking the bread to Jerusalem on Monday for veneration but it would be returned to Jordan where a permanent shrine would be built for it.

Jordan property market recovering from Gulf crisis

By Rana Sabbagh
Reuters

JORDAN'S REAL estate market is picking up in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis, with prices for scarce apartments up more than 50 per cent, but agents say a boom depends on resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

"In January and February business almost stopped," said Ali Gharaibeh, head of Jordan's Real Estate and Land Survey Office. "But matters started to recover in early April," he added.

He said government revenue from fees collected from land deals fell to JD 4.2 million in the first three months of 1991 compared with JD 5.9 million in the same period a year ago.

Final figures for April were not available.

"The minute Jordanians get back all the money they left in Kuwait banks when they fled and settle debts they incurred during their stay here, they will start investing," said Khaled Al Saudi,

manager of the Saudi Real Estate Bureau.

"We are also expecting movement when the Jordanians working in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states come back to spend their summer vacation here," he added.

Many of the 200,000 Jordanians who fled Kuwait after Iraq's August 2 invasion will soon be able to withdraw up to \$12,000 a month from accounts in Kuwaiti banks via local banks. They expect to get all their savings back once the emirate's economic activity had returned to normal.

Estate agents say a large proportion of those who had been repatriated, many of them of Palestinian origin, would be looking to buy homes with their recovered funds.

"They have experienced a sense of stability in Jordan. All they need is available here ...," said Daoud Abu Joudom, owner of Jordan's oldest property firm.

Potential clients also include Iraqis seeking short-term investments with plans to cash in and

return home once Iraq had fully recovered from the destruction of the Gulf war, they add.

Other traditional customers are Jordanian workers in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states who come home for three months to escape the summer heat and visit relatives. Many seek to buy homes that they can rent out and eventually use in retirement.

The price of apartments has almost doubled since the crisis because of soaring demand and under-supply.

A three-bedroom flat that cost JD 2,000 before last August, now fetches JD 3,200.

But for a region which witnessed four Arab-Israeli wars in the last 40 years, true prosperity will come only when Middle East peace is achieved.

"If there is peace now, there will be a boom tomorrow," said Faris Tadros, owner of Al Amalak Real Estate firm. "But if political instability continues people will always fear for their capital," he added.

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Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975
مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية

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MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:

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Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

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The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Where the core lies

WHEN GEN. Brent Scowcroft, national security adviser to U.S. President George Bush, paid a secret visit to Saudi Arabia early this month, very few people knew the real objective of the trip. The most informative news report that came out of Washington at the time suggested that the Saudi royal family was going to be in Mecca for a while and they wanted President Bush to send a senior aide for a final face-to-face discussion before they returned to Riyadh in a few weeks' time.

As it turned out, there was more than met the eye in Gen. Scowcroft's talks with the Saudi leaders. The situation in Iraq and the future of the regime in Baghdad, if we are to judge by the substance of a recent article in the Wall Street Journal, figured highly in the talks. But beyond that, the Saudis' decision not to take part in the proposed peace conference on the Middle East could have easily been conveyed to the Americans then.

It is very likely that the U.S. administration decided to keep the lid on that visit to hide the Saudi decision until Secretary of State James Baker returned to the area later on. This President Bush would do in order to fend off any pressure from the home front — basically Congress, the media and Jewish lobby groups. Naturally, all of the above had expected the Saudis to jump on the American bandwagon and make gestures towards Israel just because of the support Saudi Arabia and the Gulf emirates had received from the U.S. and Israel's "restrained" policy during the Gulf crisis and the war that followed.

Mr. Baker's explanation of "where would you draw the line (as far as participation in the conference is concerned)?" was certainly not enough to satisfy inquisitive and greedy American and Israeli minds. But the Saudis have their own agenda and the Bush administration had to understand that reasoning — for its own reasons of course.

The Saudi abstention from attending the proposed parley has indeed been disappointing to the Israelis and their lobby groups in Washington. But these people's many disappointments over the years have been a function of either their lack of understanding of Arab politics at best or their shortsightedness and grand designs at worst. While the objective reasons for the Saudi decision not to play at this time are still not clearly vivid to most of us, Israel and Washington's pro-Israel pressure groups should have realised that Saudi Arabia always played it safe as far as the Arab-Israeli conflict was concerned and was not going to get easily involved in any new game even if it was American-led.

King Fahd enunciated his own eight-point plan for solving the Palestinian problem back in 1982, when he was crown prince. He got his hands burnt, and has not been ready to try again even under the post-Gulf war circumstances. He is willing to approve and bless, but that is about all the Saudis will do for now.

If there is a lesson for the Americans in this experience, it is that even their best friends are wary of their current approach. It would be easier for the U.S. president and his secretary of state to realise that there is indeed an Arab dimension to Israel's problems in the Middle East but that the core of the conflict is with the Palestinians. The closer the U.S. gets to solving the core issue the happier all Arabs will be to join in a solid peace process.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

ACTORS on the Israeli political theatre are vying against one another or colluding with one another to stall for time and procrastinate so as to render the Baker initiative totally futile, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Monday. The paper noted that Yitzhak Shamir has now withdrawn a written statement by his Foreign Minister David Levy earlier submitted to the U.S. secretary concerning the so-called regional conference. The tactic of procrastination of which Israel is a master, has been exercised by the Jewish state over all matters related to the Palestine problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict over the past decades, and it is quite reasonable to believe that Israel would continue to play this game as long as the American administration is not willing to exercise real pressure on the Israeli leaders to force them to implement the international legitimacy in order to establish peace in the region, said the paper. It is quite natural for observers and analysts to regard Baker's mission as a mere campaign in "public relations" designed to appease the feelings of the Arab people or to support certain Arab regimes, the paper noted. It said that unless the U.S. administration transformed its declared ideas into action to convince people of its commitment to resolve the Palestine problem, no one can predict the future of this region and its developments, because tampering with the feelings of the Arabs can by no means be conducive to stability. The paper said the time has come for the U.S. administration to realise that its own performance with regard to the Gulf crisis makes it imperative for it to follow a serious course regarding the Israeli aggressors, forcing them to implement U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 without delay.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily warns the Arab countries against sacrificing a system of boycotting Israeli goods under any circumstances, and says that it should remain as a matter of principle that Arab governments adhere to earlier decisions concerning the common enemy which is trying to blackmail the Arabs. Bader Abdul Haq notes that the Arab countries have of late relaxed some of the regulations concerning the boycott of Israeli goods and points out that certain foreign companies that have strong ties with Israel and were boycotted, have been supplying Arab states with goods of various sorts. It is of course difficult to control all the goods coming from various foreign countries to the Arab World, but the Damascus-based office for the boycott of Israeli goods can do most of the job and requires backing from Arab states if its mission is to be successful, says the writer. But, he notes that Arab Gulf states have been violating the Damascus office's regulations by buying goods banned in the Arab World, like the Coca Cola beverage which is common in all Gulf markets.

The Gulf war was a mistake after all

By George McGovern

DURING 35 years in public life I can recall no previous time when officials of the U.S. government, the national press and the American public were all so jubilant and euphoric over a single experience as has been the case with the recent Gulf war against Saddam Hussein.

There are obvious reasons for this national celebration: first, from the outset our president and other spokesmen depicted Saddam Hussein as a new Hitler, whose move into Kuwait was comparable to the international threat of the Nazi leader in World War II; second, in the president's words, "the American way of life" depended on our response to the invasion of Kuwait; third, Saddam was said to have at his command one of the world's mightiest fighting machines, including a major chemical warfare capability with nuclear weapons just around the corner; fourth, still suffering from the defeat in Vietnam, worried about the loss of international markets to Japan and Germany, and frustrated by seemingly insoluble domestic difficulties, the American public was hungry for a smashing victory

that would restore our reputation as an effective superpower; fifth, President Bush so skillfully courted the United Nations and diverse countries around the globe that he was able to boast the "whole world" was with us and against Saddam.

Hollywood could not have produced a more dramatic script to enmesh all these elements than was done by Mr. Bush and his team, with the enthusiastic co-operation of most of the press, the Republicans in Congress and perhaps 20 per cent of the Democrats.

But now some of the paradoxes of the Gulf war have surfaced. If Saddam Hussein is another Hitler, why was he allowed by his conquerors to remain in power and ruthlessly suppress the Kurds and the Shi'ite Muslim insurgents?

Why, during the recent war, did President Bush publicly challenge the people of Iraq to revolt against Saddam and then explain when the two groups most likely to revolt — the Kurds and the Shi'ites — actually did revolt that he could not intervene in the domestic affairs of another nation?

If we are now concerned over the loss of life among the Kurds in Iraq, why so little concern about the many thousands of other Iraqis who died under our aerial bombardment because they had the misfortune of being under Saddam's dictatorship?

If a major purpose for all of this was to safeguard Gulf oil resources, what are we to say about the Kuwaiti oil wells now ablaze and polluting the Gulf — perhaps for years to come?

And, most troubling of all, why did the nations that coalesced against Saddam in Desert Storm supply him with \$50 billion in arms during the 1980s? Why also did President Reagan and, later, President Bush authorise the sale of \$1.5 billion in high technology equipment that Saddam utilised for chemical and nuclear facilities?

I remain convinced that the 47 Senators and nearly 200 Congressmen — mostly Democrats — who voted in January to stay with the economic siege of Iraq rather than go to war, voted correctly. With a little patience the international community could have shut down both Saddam's economy and his military machine with no loss of life and property. Like most wars, this was an unnecessary war, with destructive political,

economic, environmental and ecological consequences now beginning to unfold.

The immediate question for the United States and the United Nations is what to do with the long-suffering Kurds struggling to stay alive in the mountainous regions of northern Iraq along the Turkish border. The television screen leaves no doubt that these are among the most desperate and painfully suffering refugees in the world. They will die by the thousands from hunger, disease, exposure and despair unless aid and protection are extended quickly and on a larger scale than yet achieved.

Notwithstanding the obvious error committed by President Bush in urging the uprising of the Iraqi people against Saddam and then deserting in not committing our forces to battle unilaterally in a civil war, Mr. Bush contends that Desert Storm slew the "Vietnam syndrome" dragon, but he is acting on one of the bitter lessons of that tragic American intervention when he backs away from U.S. military intervention in another country's civil strife. For the U.S. to send troops into Iraq to defend the Kurds would in the long run add to the bloodshed and suffering as it did in Vietnam.

The proposal by Prime Minister John Major and other European leaders to create an enclave for the Kurds in northern Iraq, to be protected by United Nations forces, makes more sense.

The Bush administration has reacted to this proposal in a confused and contradictory manner, but now seems willing to co-operate. It would seem both morally responsible and practical for a U.N. peacekeeping force to protect both the Kurds and international relief workers against future Iraqi attacks. Eventually the Kurds should be assisted in returning to their homes as part of the peace settlement. But there must be a clear condition for lifting economic sanctions against Baghdad — that the Kurds should receive humane treatment.

The urgent priority now is the delivery of food, medical assistance, clothing and other aid under U.N. auspices.

The Bush administration has acted properly in warning the Iraqi government against any military activity in the vicinity of the Kurdish refugee concentrations where international relief operations are under way. It would appear that the insurgency has almost ended.

Turkey should be encouraged

with pledges of international assistance to open its borders to the Kurds on a temporary basis. There is a definite need for shelter, hospital care and other assistance that can be provided only in Turkey and Iran.

The Turks, who were rewarded for joining the U.N. coalition against Saddam, have ignored U.N. resolutions against their invasion of Cyprus. They can become the "good guys" of the hour by opening their borders and their hearts to the pitiful refugees now scrambling for their lives along the border.

If the bloody and destructive war in the Gulf, which spawned the current tragedy of the Kurds, is to lead in some way to "a new world order" — President Bush's expressed prediction — then the conscience of the world must be engaged vigorously in relieving their plight. There can be no moral or political case made for conducting a major war to restore the emir of Kuwait to his palace if that crusade ends with the Kurds homeless, stranded and dying in the mountains of northern Iraq.

George McGovern is a former U.S. senator and was the 1972 Democratic presidential nominee. This article is reprinted from The Observer.

Was George Bush involved in Iran secret deal?

By Gary Sick

SUSPICIONS about a deal between the Reagan campaign and Iran over the hostages have circulated since the day of President Reagan's inaugural, when Iran agreed to release the 52 American hostages exactly five minutes after Mr. Reagan took the oath of office. Later as it became known that arms started to flow to Iran via Israel only a few days after the inauguration, suspicions deepened that a secret arms-for-hostages deal had been concluded.

Five years later, when the Iran-contra affair revealed what seemed to be a similar swap of hostages for arms delivered through Israel, questions were revived about the 1980 election. In a nice, ironic twist, the phrase "October surprise," which vice presidential candidate George Bush had coined to warn of possible political manipulation of the hostages by Jimmy Carter, began to be applied to the suspected secret activities of the 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign.

I was a member of the Carter administration and on the staff of the National Security Council from August 1976 to April 1981, with responsibility for monitoring Iran policy. I first heard these rumors in 1981 and I dismissed them as fanciful. I again heard them during the 1988 election campaign, and I again refused to believe them. I had worked in and around the Middle East long enough to be sceptical of the conspiracy theories that abound in the region.

Then two years ago, I began collecting documentation for a book on the Reagan administration's policies towards Iran. That effort grew into a massive computerised data base, the equivalent of many thousands of pages. As I sifted through this mass of material, I began to recognise a curious pattern in the events surrounding the 1980 election. Increasingly, I began to focus on that period, and interviewed a wide range of sources. I benefited greatly from the help of many interested, talented investigative journalists.

In the course of hundreds of interviews, in the U.S., Europe and the Middle East, I have been told repeatedly that individuals associated with the Reagan-Bush campaign of 1980 met secretly with Iranian officials to delay the release of the American hostages until after the presidential election. For this favour, Iran was rewarded with a substantial supply of arms from Israel.

Some of the sources interviewed by me or my colleagues are or were government officials who claimed to have knowledge of these events by virtue of their official duties or their access to intelligence reports. Most insisted on anonymity.

Other sources are low-level intelligence operatives and arms dealers who are no boys scouts. A number of them have been arrested or have served prison time for gun-running, fraud, counterfeiting or drugs. Some may be seeking publicity or revenge, but others have nothing to gain from talking about these events, and genuinely feared for their personal safety. Several sources said they were participants, personally involved in or present at the events they described.

Their accounts were not identical, but on the central facts they were remarkably consistent, sur-

prisingly so in view of the range of nationalities, backgrounds and perspectives of the sources. Because of my past government experience, I knew about certain events that could not possibly be known to most of the sources, yet their stories confirmed those facts. It was the absence of contradictions on the key elements of the story that encouraged me to continue probing. This weight of testimony has overcome my initial doubts.

The story is tangled and murky, and it may never be fully unraveled. At this point, however, the outlines of what I learned can be summarised as follows: In December 1979 and January 1980, Cyrus and Jamsid Hashemi, two brothers who had good contacts in Iranian revolutionary circles, approached the Carter administration seeking support for their candidate in the Iranian presidential elections. I met both of them briefly during that period. Although Washington was sympathetic, their appeal was overtaken by events. Their candidate lost, but they remained in contact with the U.S. government, providing useful information about developments in the hostage crisis.

Cyrus died in 1986, only three months after his cooperation with the U.S. Customs Service in a dramatic sting operation that resulted in the arrest of several Americans, Israelis and Europeans on charges of plotting illegal arms sales. Jamsid Hashemi, who was also involved in international arms sales, was not implicated in that affair. I re-established contact with Mr. Hashemi in March 1990 and interviewed him a number of times. According to Mr. Hashemi, William Casey, who had just become Ronald Reagan's campaign manager, met with him in late February or early March 1980 at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington. Mr. Casey quickly made it clear that he wanted to prevent Jimmy Carter from gaining any political advantage from the hostage crisis. The Hashemis agreed to cooperate with Mr. Casey without the knowledge of the Carter administration.

Mr. Hashemi told me that he and his brother helped to arrange two critical meetings. In a Madrid hotel in late July 1980, an important Iranian cleric, Mehdi Karrubi, who is now the speaker of the Iranian parliament, allegedly met with Mr. Casey and a U.S. intelligence officer who was operating outside authority. The same group met again several weeks later. Mr. Hashemi told me that Mr. Karrubi agreed in the second Madrid meeting to cooperate with the Reagan campaign about the timing of any hostage release.

In return, he was promised that the Reagan administration, once in office, would return Iran's frozen assets and help them acquire badly needed military equipment and spare parts. Two other sources subsequently described these meetings in very similar terms in interviews with me and my colleagues. The Carter administration had no knowledge of these meetings. At about the time of the second meeting in Madrid, according to two former Israeli intelligence officers I interviewed, individuals associated with the Reagan campaign made contact with senior government officials in Israel, which agreed to act as the chan-

nel for the arms deliveries to Iran that Mr. Casey had promised. Israel had been eager to sell military equipment to Iran, but the Carter administration, which was maintaining a total arms embargo on Iran, had refused to agree.

As the threat of war with Iraq began to mount in early September 1980, Iran opened direct hostage negotiations with the Carter administration. In retrospect, it appears that Iran may have been playing both sides, seeking the highest bid for the release of the hostages. The Carter administration, however, did not realise it was involved in a three-cornered bidding contest, and resisted Iran's apparent interest in military equipment.

The Iraqi invasion of Iran on Sept. 22, 1980, added both urgency and confusion to the various negotiating tracks. Two former Reagan campaign aides told me that this generated new fears within the Reagan-Bush cam-

meetings in several hotels in Paris, involving members of the Reagan-Bush campaign and high-level Iranian and Israeli representatives. Accounts of these meetings and the exact number of participants vary considerably among the more than 15 sources who claim direct or indirect knowledge of some aspect of them. There is, however, widespread agreement on three points: William Casey was a key participant; the Iranian representatives agreed that the hostages would not be released prior to the presidential election on Nov. 4; in return, Israel would serve as a conduit for arms and spare parts to Iran.

At least five of the sources who say they were in Paris in connection with these meetings insist that George Bush was present for at least one meeting. Three of the sources say that they saw him there. In the absence of further information, I have not made up my mind about this allegation.



question until only hours before election day.

After the election, the lame-duck Carter administration resumed hostage negotiations through Iranian intermediaries, but the talks stalled. On Jan. 15, Iran did an about-face, offering a series of startling concessions that reignited the talks and resulted in a final agreement in the last few hours of Jimmy Carter's presidency. The hostages were released on Jan. 21, 1981, minutes after Ronald Reagan was sworn in as president.

Almost immediately thereafter, according to Israeli and American former officials, arms began to flow to Iran in substantial quantities. A former senior official in the Israeli Ministry of Defence told me that the shipments by air and sea involved hundreds of millions of dollars worth of equipment and that detailed lists of each shipment were provided to senior officials in the Reagan administration. Moshe Arens, the Israeli ambassador to Washington in 1982, told The Boston Globe in October 1982 that Israel's arms shipments to Iran at this time were coordinated with the U.S. government "at almost the highest of levels."

Former officials and participants in the Reagan-Bush campaign team uniformly have denied any personal knowledge or involvement in such a deal, although none of them categorically denies that contacts with Iran before the 1980 election may have taken place. Richard V. Allen vehemently denies any agreement between the campaign and Iran over the timing of the hostage release. He told me and others, however, that there are "self-starters" in every campaign and that he cannot vouch for every "independent, free-lance, spontaneous, over-the-transom" volunteer.

Can this story be believed? There is no "smoking gun" and I cannot prove exactly what happened at each stage. In the ab-

sence of hard documentary evidence, the possibility of an elaborate disinformation campaign cannot be excluded.

But all of that must be balanced against the sheer numbers and diversity of the various sources, from eight countries on four continents.

The allegations of these individuals have many disturbing implications for the U.S. political system. One is the tampering with foreign policy for partisan benefit. That has, of course, happened before and it may well happen again, but it assumes special poignancy in this case since it would have involved tampering with the lives and freedom of 52 Americans.

Another implication is that leaders of the U.S. exposed themselves to the possibility of blackmail by Iran or Israel. Third, the events suggest that the arms-for-hostage deal that in the twilight of the Reagan presidency became known as the Iran-contra affair, instead of being an aberration, was in fact the re-emergence of a policy that began even before the Reagan-Bush administration took office.

But finally, it implies a willingness to pursue private, high-risk foreign policy adventures out of sight of the electorate. That may be realpolitik. Its practitioners may indeed win big. But it is profoundly antidemocratic.

During my research, I spoke to several of the former hostages. I was deeply moved, by the response of one in particular. After listening to the evidence, he said simply: "I don't want to believe it. It's too painful to think about it." Painful it is, but the rest of us are obliged to think about it. Hard.

Gary Sick, an adjunct professor of Middle East politics at Columbia University, is author of "All Fall Down," about the 1980 hostage crisis. The article is reprinted from The New York Times.

LETTERS

Peace Can be imposed

To the Editor:

I COULD not help, while listening to Mr. Baker's televised interview in Agaba with the international and local press, but wonder whether this is the same person representing the same administration we have been hearing for the past nine months. The measured tone of voice, the kindly understanding attitude, the lack of willingness to "impose" on others a "peace" they do not want to themselves create, the mature handoff attitude is so different from the hasty, masterful imposition of the "international" will on two brotherly countries that even belonged to the same "Arab" league, Iraq and Kuwait.

It seems that either Mr. Baker and by implication Mr. Bush think we suffer from total amnesia or we do not think at all. Unhappily all we suffer from is that we lost a war, but that is all we lost. After having seen what CAN be done by the international body and the United States in particular when it really wants to set right what was wrong, all we want is the implementation of the United Nations will and the implementation of resolutions 242 and 338.

Mr. Baker should know that the Arabs — all the Arabs, whether Palestinian, Jordanian or others — want peace. They have always wanted peace. But unless Israel is willing to exchange what is there to talk about?

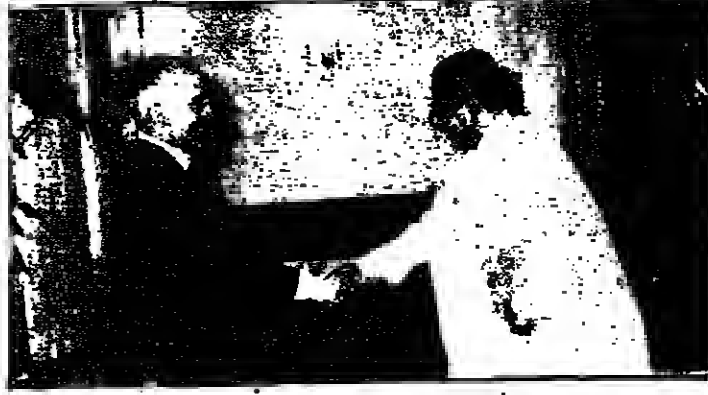
Najwa Khuri Bulos M.D.,
Professor, Dept of Pediatrics,
University of Jordan Hospital,
Amman.



AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein received at the Raghadan Palace Monday the credentials of three newly appointed ambassadors to Jordan. They were Ambassador of South Korea



Kong S. Wong (left), Ambassador of Britain Patrick Evers (centre) and Ambassador of Mauritania Ahmad Ben Sidi. The presentation ceremonies were attended by Chief of the Royal Court Sharif Zaid



Ben Shaker, King Hussein's Political Advisor Adam Abu Odeh and Chief Chamberlain Prince Raad Ben Zaid. (Petra photos)

King receives credentials of new envoys

Crown Prince: Impact of Gulf war prolonged, poses challenge

(Continued from page 1)

indeed, the fourth estate, the media should be politicized," he said.

"On the contrary, a certain objectivity is required, and this means freedom with responsibility, something that is in the nature of nation building and this is something that we have to get on with."

"There are many in our media who feel they represent Arab views imported from this or that pan-Arab movement, or pan-Islamic movement. I think the time has come to talk about establishing model press foundations; whereas we've had many many Jordanians working in huge industrial companies all over the world, very few Jordanian journalists have worked in major newspapers. And this is actually a question of building from the grass roots, something to be proud of," he said.

The Crown Prince expressed hope that all political forces would participate "within the constitutional context, and participate on the basis of issues, on the basis of programmes, not on the basis of resorting to extremist methods, per se, and there I think really the National Charter is extremely important in inviting the emergence of structured party life. Here the problem of the silent majority is that it remains silent. I sometimes feel that the experiment for example of Brazil is an interesting one, where franchise is mandatory, everyone has to vote."

"The silent majority in most countries stand for stability and progress, but they want it to arrive at their armchairs, with the least effort exerted by them; and I think that the silent majority is going to opt and take a holiday whenever there is a national election, you will only expect a limited response on the part of the electorate, and hence the silent majority remains silent and apathetic," he said.

Following is a full transcript of the interview:

Q: What do you feel has changed, if anything, by the war?

A: I think that the concept of solving problems in the region between states is clearly the issue ahead; as we look at the Arab-Israeli conflict, there is this emphasis on the dual track interested solutions. However what worries me as one looks at the Palestinian-Israeli aspect of the dialogue ahead, which I think is essential of course to peace making, a new element is introduced, and that is, the element of a state talking to a people, to an ethnic grouping, and my hope is that this will contribute to the regional order and that the two tracks effectively will meet at a given moment, so that we end up talking about problem solving, not at the expense of state sovereignty, but that are contributing to state sovereignty.

Q: Was there anything about the war that made it easier to solve these problems? Did the war accomplish anything?

A: Well, President Carter has said that there are no winners, they're all losers, and at the humanitarian level, I think that is a very much the case. I mean, I can't help feeling that the death of tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of people, either directly during the war, or as a result of the aftermath in terms of the epidemics and the terrible lack of international financial support for the reconstruction of Iraq, I can't help feeling effectively that the situation in the Middle East which was clearly one of inequality between the resource-rich countries which, after all, in terms of the International Bank for the Reconstruction and Development, only invest five per cent of their total earnings in the Arab-African continent, and compare that with the fact that \$18 billion have already been signed up in new defence contracts, and compare that with over \$50 billion spent in during the five months of the crisis, or the eight months of the crisis, there is certainly a story to be told.

Q: So it found that the war left things as they were, if not worse?

A: Well, we're talking about politics where people matter, and frankly, I am interested generally in the plight of people, whether Iraqi or Palestinian, or Kuwaitis or Israelis... trans-

nationally... I think that we have to look at people as people. If we continue to regard the Middle East as a barrel of oil and talk about it as a Middle East where resources matter, then clearly things will continue to worsen, because there is no concept emerging of equality within the region yet.

Q: What did the war do to the national Arab unity? Has this been shattered?

A: I believe the Arab League has to be a functioning organization that addresses the Charter of Paris 34, using the same idiom, using the matrix, if you will, of resources, water, energy, depth, and of course, using the humanitarian issues, democracy, human rights and so forth, on the basis of baskets that are relevant to Arab, and each of these baskets requires technical competence and integrity in addressing the international community in the same language. But just to talk about the Arab unity as some kind of ephemeral goal which we've done for decades after decades, is not going to realise it. Arab unity cannot reconvene without in-depth preparation, without the substantial preparation by technocrats, by specialists, by public participation. In that sense, I think, the goal of Arab unity is rather dim today at the beginning of the nineties.

Q: What about trans-Arab relations, between Jordan and Saudi Arabia, for instance? There's been a tremendous legacy of bitterness and now mistrust?

A: I think, as we look at the crisis, it's very difficult to go over the chronology, although we are interested in producing an analysis, a white paper, if you will; but I think it'll be very difficult in the foreseeable future to agree on chronology, it may be something desirable, although there is so much going on in it, as well.

Q: But I would hope that we could get to a point in inter-Arab relations where, on a scale of ten, one does not have to agree with the same numerical value on each of the ten points; that we are mature enough, as with the European example, to agree, to disagree on certain points, while at the same time, recognize the fact that regional stability cannot be achieved without complementing one another.

Q: During the war, Saudi Arabia's leaders really believed that Jordan was part of a conspiracy against them? Why is that?

A: The conspiracy theory unfortunately seems to have been related to Jordan's participation in the Arab Cooperation Council, which included, as you know, Egypt, Iraq and Yemen; and the realities of the creation of this council was from our point of view purely economic; you had the hinterland, Arab countries, the manpower-producing Arab countries, complementing the GCC. If you recall, we applied for the membership of the GCC, or even auxiliary, auxiliary membership of the GCC first came about, but I suppose there, as I said, this Pandora's box of gossip; His Majesty using his heritage and his lineage and referring to himself as Sharif Hussein was an act of modesty, saying that I don't want to be referred to in anything other than the simplest possible terms, and I think this is really a chapter that has to be turned over; we can't continue rehearsing the past; there's too much to be done today, in the present and the future, too much to be addressed, in terms of people's poverty, in terms of people's hunger, in terms of people's human aspirations.

Q: During the crisis, King Hussein turned out many terrible things that would come out of it; some of them happened, some of them didn't. I mean, he talked about plots to redraw borders or to divide up the spoils, which didn't happen; but he also talked about a legacy of bitterness that would be around for a long time; how does he do you think?

A: You have to look at the situation in Iraq on the ground today, and I think the issue of the Kurds, for example, has been cited as a case in point. The Kurds felt that they had been incited to revolt; and at the same time when they did so, were in a situation where the international community today speaks of armed armies as standard bearers of the United Nations, coming in to protect civilians, and, of course, there's a difference between looking at an enclave as a zone of tranquillity which is supervised by United Nations civil servants, and actually saying when we have to physically protect the rights of these people by positioning troops.

So I think the situation is one where clearly there's a great deal of confusion and we seem to conveniently overlook the fact that the damage in the context of Iraq is the equivalent of eight Hiroshimas. Now what that means on the ground is going to emerge in the months ahead, that the Iraqi people, hopefully, get back to the reconstruction; that there are a war-weary people, after ten years of war, the Iraq-Iran war first, and now this; and regardless of the rights and wrongs, there are a stoic people, but at the same time I think, deep in their hearts, they must be extremely resentful of the damage brought on

them, I think, one can't point a finger on it and blame a given party. The fact is those countries who are not part of a pact, are not part of a coalition, are not part of an economic military, or security pact, feel — here I talk about politics where people matter — what we call in Arabic Hatab Jahannam, the hell's firewood.

Q: What about bitterness here in Jordan?

A: Here there is still the bitterness over the inside, over the fact that the Palestine question has not received the international attention it deserves. But I think, on the other hand, one has to say clearly that the (U.S.) secretary of state, deserves recognition and credit for having taken what is a very bold initiative at a difficult time to try to bring the parties to the negotiating table; so, one hopes that this window of opportunity which really can't be more than a calendar year March 91, to March 92, will result in reuniting of that corner.

Q: And how do you assess the process of reconciliation between Jordan and the U.S.?

A: I think the more both parties are exposed to the facts, the more they talk to each other, and not at each other, and it is more likely it is the history of reconciliation can be brought about. I think from the very beginning of this, from the onset of this crisis, there has been a difference in perspective, because of geographical location; there's a difference between looking out at the United States from within the Middle East.

Q: What is that difference?

A: The difference is that we carry, a rabbi once said to me, and he shared it, the "baggage of history"; whereas, the United States in a very pragmatic American way, wants to start history, as of the last crisis, or as of the last challenge, and that is where we, I think, have to come half the way of understanding what makes the respective interlocutors tick.

Q: Do you think that misunderstanding, the absence of Americans' understanding of this region, of the history of this region, is what was at the heart of where Jordan's role was?

A: Well, let me put it this way: The other day, an American visitor said to me, "Do you support national self-determination for Kurds and Palestinians?" And I said, please don't play with my emotions, because, in the case of Palestinians, their land has been occupied, they may be five million, as against 25 millions of Kurds; but as far as the Kurds are concerned, they are a minority, although 25 million, in four countries. So, there is a difference, but as far as national self-determination is concerned, this is the American-best put forward. I recall as a student of history, going back to the Wilsonian era; now we would like to see people in this part of the world associating with the face of the United States, the face of human rights, of self-determination, and not the face of the use of force, even though force could be argued as being in support of American values on the American way of life, but it is not understood here as such.

Q: The people I talked to here, especially those that were educated in the States, say that they really feel betrayed, a sense of betrayal by the

U.S.; they believed everything they learned about American democracy, values, and then, it was completely contradicted.

A: Well, there you are; and probably the American interlocutor would say we were betrayed by Jordan because they were not with us in this one. And that's where as I say, there's a difference between perceiving things from within and from without.

Q: Do you feel that America perceived that you were not with them, but in fact you don't? That wasn't the case.

A: On the contrary, I think that in taking an independent role and warning against war and the damage of war, and the environmental damage, the humanitarian damage, in fact we were trying to promote what we believed was in the best interest of the United States, and the United States' values. That is to say, as I said, at the war, someone argued that it would take four days, and I kept saying, what happens on day five? We are living in day five today. We knew, effectively, that this Pandora's box would lead to many many problems that need to be resolved; war cannot, per se, bring much good to people.

Q: His Majesty emerged from this crisis with more credibility, perhaps, than he has ever before, both in the occupied territories and in Jordan. How does that enhance his role in the peace process?

A: I think that the recognition of his integrity and his long years of service and his ability to communicate with the international community, that is to say, his vision is not localized. It is also recognised internationally, (also) makes him a valuable contributor in the stability in and the peace with justice that we have all sought; and I think this is recognised by many.

Q: But he has always had that role, he's been there since the beginning, he's been there since the beginning of the crisis? Is he able to do anything different now than before?

A: I said to an English politician, right-wing politician, during this crisis: You know His Majesty's political standing is unprecedentedly high, and the response is good and I went on to say, but for the wrong reasons from your point of view; and the politician's comment was 'I don't care what the reasons are.' So in political terms, yes, I think that credibility will mean that Jordan will be in a better position to play... what President Mitterrand once described the role of a key country.

Q: What kind of things the King might be able to do now?

A: I think that in terms of basic security, and there I mean not only military security which is important, but in terms of popular participation in stabilising, not only the country and the region, the path of democracy and participation is one that he can encourage much more effectively and credibly, i.e., building the institutions of democracy is the course ahead. In that sense, I think that Jordan can contribute a model of security to the region; this was not possible in the past. But, of course, once again, Jordan has to be taken seriously.

Q: In terms of the peace process, can the King take more of a leadership role than he had in the past? Or can he agree to certain things that be

couldn't before? People have told me that they feel he has more flexibility now, more manoeuvrability?

A: Well, let's face it. In terms of flexibility, Jordan has probably been among the most flexible participants in the dialogue of peace that has existed since 1967, since United Nations Security Council resolutions. We haven't had a hang up, just as His Majesty said a few days ago, with Secretary Baker over buzz words, over what you would like to call it international conference or peace conference or what have you. We do not object, per se, to meetings between Arabs and Israelis in a context of peace. And I think this is the kind of structural contribution that His Majesty will, hopefully, be able to continue to make. But let us hope, as I said, the peace process itself, and Jordan can be taken seriously.

Q: I want to ask you about the war's effects on Jordan both economically and politically? During the war, people predicted that the King would emerge popularly the leader of a broken country. No direct predictions were made about how Jordan would emerge. The economy was on the verge of collapse. Now that it's over and the war was cut short; how bad is the damage?

A: The damage in terms of the return of over 240,000 Jordanians from Kuwait, dependents of Kuwait whose future is unresolved, and we are talking about another quarter of a million people who could possibly, God forbid, represent a further exodus from the Gulf, is one of an enormous demographic burden on Jordan.

If the peace process does not make the necessary progress, the sort of damage hangs over us in terms of Palestinian demography from the territories and possibly from other Arab countries as well. And I just like to make it very clear that unless and until the national economy of Jordan which is suffering losses, due to political economy — I'm not talking about the national economy of Jordan as such — I think that there is a possibility because back, I think that we can deal with our foreign debt, I think that we are a dynamic community, and we've proven this after the '67 war. But unless and until the political economy generated by the war is addressed, and all countries in this region shoulder their responsibility towards the people, it would be very difficult for Jordan alone, to be regarded as the repository of all the have-nots of the region.

Q: What's the biggest danger to Jordan's stability? Is it economic or is it political?

A: I think the biggest danger to Jordan's stability is the inability to pursue the course of democracy, whether because of political or economic reasons. Internally, I think that when we talk about regional stability, we talk about democracy, security and prosperity, and in Jordan we mean it. We are at the threshold and a level of achievement, intellectually, educationally, socially, where we could be a beacon for others. If, however, this process is disturbed, then clearly extremists — of the extreme right — one can't say, ex-

traneous left any more in this world — but extremists will seek to undermine Jordan's achievements.

Q: When you say it is not allowed in

progress, what could stop it?

A: Well, the vision of Jordan once again as the springboard for military, or guerrilla action against Israel, the return to visions of the past where violence and the law of the gun, once again regarded as the only way of expressing true Arab patriotic feelings on the Palestinian issue, and so forth. This is the kind of instability that we would face.

Q: Right. You're saying the biggest threat is that if the process of democratisation is not allowed to continue; what could stop it from continuing?

A: As I said, if there is not a process whereby institutions are built, whereby the economic prosperity of the country is invited, whereby free dialogue is invited, and I think intimidation will come at the grass roots level from the extremists.

Q: Where would you assess the stage of democracy here?

A: Well, my hope is when we speak of the executive branch, the legislative branch and the judiciary, that we can develop efficiency, integrity, and a meaningful contribution to building those institutions which, unfortunately, have suffered a great deal from politicisation. Democracy did not say that all branches of government, and, indeed, the fourth estate, the media, should be politicised. On the contrary, a certain objectivity is required, and this means freedom with responsibility, something that is in the nature of nation building and this is something that we have to get on with.

Q: How will external forces related to that? I mean basically, all that you can do is hope that the media here exercise restraint, hope that the parties develop that are responsible, but what do external forces have to do? How do they affect the internal process of democratisation? Is Jordan dependent on what happens outside it?

A: Well, I think you hit the nail on the head. There are many in our media who feel they represent Arab views imported from this or that pan-Arab movement, or pan-Islamic movement. I think the time has come to talk about establishing model press foundations; whereas we've had many many Jordanians working in huge industrial companies all over the world, very few Jordanian journalists have worked in major newspapers. And this is actually a question of building from the grass roots, something to be proud of.

Q: I always wonder why don't people expect to be journalists as they export engineers and? I've a question, what, if Syria and Saudi Arabia were two democracies.

A: Well, that's I think an awkward question for me to answer. I don't want to judge anyone else. I'd try to record everyone in his own perspective, has given the fullest freedoms, but I think when you speak about the Helsinki process, when you speak about 34 countries in the Charter of Paris, there are certain criteria for democratisation which are international criteria to which we all have to begin to relate.

Q: I guess what I am asking is would they have joined the coalition against Iraq, if they had been democracies?

A: Well, I think the questions of security which are generated by fear, or a perception of threat, are issues that have to be addressed by governments, whether they have functioning

Jordan receiving Iraqi oil

(Continued from page 1)

of the embargo by pointing out that no cash was changing hands since Baghdad was repaying its debts to Amman in the form of oil.

The allied attacks on tanks were carried out despite the Jordanian argument.

According to figures released by the Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company, Iraq supplied 2.3 million tonnes of crude oil in 1990, representing more than 86 per cent of the Kingdom's needs. Saudi Arabia supplied 13.2 per cent. The rest of the 2.7 million tonnes of crude processed at the Zarqa refinery in 1990

came from local sources — mainly the Hamzah oilfields on the border with Iraq.

The Kingdom's total import of oil products during the year was 828,660 tonnes. Iraq accounted for 510,900 tonnes (62 per cent), and pre-invasion Kuwait sent 270,134 tonnes.

The daily consumption in Jordan prior to the Iraqi invasion was around 50,000 barrels per day. This rose to around 65,000 barrels per day with the influx of hundreds of thousands of expatriates and refugees from Kuwait and Iraq into the Kingdom, but subsequent conservation measures reduced the consumption by about 30 per cent, officials have said.

"Our present daily consumption is between 35,000 to 40,000 barrels per day," said an official in March after energy conservation measures took effect. The measures have been called off since then.

A request by Iraq, meanwhile, to sell \$942 million in oil over the next four months remains pending at the Sanction Committee. The request said Iraq needed the funds urgently to buy basic foodstuff and medicine for its people coping with the devastating effect of the war and subsequent internal rebellions. But reports from the U.N. indicated that some of the Security Council members were dragging their feet over the issue as a tactic to pressure Iraq into accepting the allied presence in northern Iraq with the ostensible purpose of defending and distributing aid to hundreds of thousands of refugees who fled anti-government Kurdish riots in the north last month.

According to oil industry reports, Iraq have around 35 million barrels of oil stored in its pipelines — two of them running through Saudi Arabia and two through Turkish territory. It is believed that Iraq could repair damages caused to pumping facilities.

Even if two-thirds of the quantity were to be retrieved, they will fall far below the amount mentioned in the request to the U.N., according to oil industry experts who say that Iraq will have to export between 450,000 to 500,000 barrels per day for the next few months to meet the target of \$942 million.

Makeshift repairs have been carried out at Iraq's second largest oil refinery at Al Dora, and the facility is now processing about 60,000 barrels per day — around 20 per cent of the country's pre-war consumption.

Even before the Gulf war, figures related to Iraq's economic performance and oil and energy situation were never fully released; economic experts say they have to judge the country's situation by external sources and factors as well as guesswork.

Egypt hits Israel

(Continued from page 1)

the Netherlands and Egypt. "Israel is planting obstacles in the way of the composition of the Palestinian delegation" to the proposed peace conference, Mr. Ghali said.

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Auditors find fund insuring bank deposits in U.S. in 'precarious state'

WASHINGTON (AP) — Government auditors have said the fund insuring the nation's bank deposits is in even worse shape than previously thought and recommended that the industry pay in \$15 billion this year to keep it from going broke.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.'s (FDIC) fund "is nearly insolvent and I cannot over-emphasize the importance we place on rebuilding it as soon as possible," said Charles Bowsher, head of the General Accounting Office (GAO).

"By next year, unless the fund is rebuilt, it will almost certainly be insolvent," Bowsher told the Senate Banking Committee.

The FDIC is disputing the GAO's accounting. Bowsher told reporters after the hearing that he would like to settle the disagreement by June.

He said if the GAO view prevails, the FDIC's ability to borrow would be cut dramatically. That could make it impossible for

the agency to handle another large bank failure without additional authority to borrow from the treasury, he said.

Bowsher refused to say if he expected a major bank failure in the next three months, but recommended that Congress pass legislation shorting up the FDIC before legislators' August recess. The handful of senators attending the hearing agreed on the need to act swiftly, but they were cool to Bowsher's suggestion they require banks to make a one-time \$15 billion payment.

Senator Donald Riegle Jr. said he was not yet ready to rule out the borrowing approach suggested by the Bush administration. Senator Alan Dixon said requiring banks to pay \$15 billion now could greatly worsen the credit crunch, dealing a heavy blow to an already-weak economy.

The FDIC previously reported that 597 bank failures over the past three years had its fund from \$8.1 billion at the end of 1990.

But Bowsher, whose estimate is that the insurance fund had "no higher than \$5 billion" and possibly as little as \$3.1 billion at the end of 1990.

"One thing is clear — the fund is in a precarious state," he said. FDIC Chairman L. William Seidman, in previous remarks, defended his agency's accounting for 1990 but conceded the fund could run out by the end of September.

The GAO reviewed the condition of 368 of the nation's largest troubled banks, holding about half the industry's assets, and found that 10 of them, in effect, were insolvent last year.

An additional 31 are nearly insolvent, and 66 more might fail in the next few years, he said.

Seidman and the Bush administration support a plan to authorize the FDIC to borrow up to \$70 billion, guaranteed by the taxpayers but repaid by banks through an increase in their insurance premiums.

Developing countries lament lack of funds to fuel economic growth

WASHINGTON (R) — Despite efforts to tighten their belts and pursue free market reforms, developing countries are in serious trouble trying to attract scarce funds needed to finance economic growth.

Finance ministers from 24 developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America meeting in Washington Sunday said that despite a decade of sacrifices after a debt crisis broke out in the early 1980s, banks are reluctant to lend to them.

"We are very concerned that many of our countries have made all the adjustments but the money simply is not flowing," Colombian Finance Minister Radolfo Hommes told a news conference after chairing a meeting of the so-called Group of 24 (G-24).

The problem has been aggravated by a worldwide scarcity in savings which alone can meet the massive financing needs of eastern Europe, the developing countries and Gulf countries rebuilding shattered economies after the war.

Although the debt problem for many countries in Latin America is less pressing than it was in the early 1980s when commercial banks abruptly stopped extending new loans, many countries in the region and elsewhere face a bitter legacy.

The problem of a savings shortage is compounded by the fact that many developing countries have become net capital exporters in order to repay debts to banks, multilateral lending agencies or industrial countries.

"We have the curious situation of poorer countries being net exporters of savings," Hommes said.

The Group of 24 was also critical of a plan launched two years ago by U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady to give debtor countries the chance to cut their commercial bank exposure provided they pursued market-oriented reforms.

"After two years of im-

plementing the enhanced debt strategy and debt service reduction programmes, only a small number of countries have been able to negotiate restructuring packages," the G-24 said in a statement.

The cash relief for developing countries and the reduction in debt was "rather modest," the statement added.

Among countries which have benefited from Brady debt relief deals are Mexico, Venezuela, Costa Rica, the Philippines and Uruguay.

Major debtors such as Brazil and Argentina have yet to begin serious negotiations with their bank creditors.

Starved for funds, the Group of 24 has strongly backed a Japanese plan for the IMF to issue more of its own currency, known as Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), to member countries in order to help them the worldwide capital shortage.



Salem Abdul Aziz Al Sahab

Kuwait to lift all controls on hard currency transfers in June

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait, which clamped controls on currency transfers after the Iraqi occupation, is to remove all the restrictions in June, the governor of the central bank said in an interview published Sunday.

Sheikh Salem Abdul Aziz Al Sahab told the New Dawn newspaper that the controls, in force since March 24, were expected to be lifted by June 24.

The restrictions were enforced due to the situation in the country, Sheikh Salem said.

He said a temporary committee has been formed to supervise money transfers for imports and to make sure purchase prices were in line with world prices.

Kuwait suffered severe shortages under the Iraqi occupation and only recently began restocking its shops.

Kuwaitis can now transfer 4,000 dinars (\$14,000) abroad per month and can withdraw up to the same amount from local banks.

Sheikh Salem said more could be transferred if clients presented documents to local banks proving need.

The governor said Kuwaitis' debts to the six commercial banks, cancelled by the emir earlier this month, amounted to more than 1.397 billion dinars (some \$4.2 billion).

He said around 187,000 people would benefit from the cancellation.

The move was aimed at helping merchants, traders and private citizens recover from seven months of Iraqi occupation. The debts will apparently be settled by the central bank.

On Sunday the Kuwaiti cabinet set up a four-member ministerial committee to study the country's needs for foreign labour in speeding up work on resuming services.

U.S. fails to persuade allies to lower interest rates despite Bush appeal

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States lost its battle Sunday to persuade its major industrial allies to immediately lower interest rates to spur global economic growth, but American officials signalled that they hoped to win the war.

In a carefully worded communique that had something for everyone, the Group of Seven (G-7) industrial nations agreed on a common goal of lower interest rates but did not signal a precise route.

"From now on each country will carry out its policy according to its (own) conditions," Bank of Japan Governor Yasushi Mieno told reporters after the seven-hour meeting.

Washington has pulled out all the stops in its campaign to lower world interest rates, with U.S. President George Bush calling in G-7 policymakers for a half-hour chat at the White House before their meeting.

But some other members of the G-7, particularly Germany, could not be convinced, arguing that rates needed to be kept high to keep inflation in check.

The gathering of the G-7 — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — was the high point of the semi-annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank that ends Tuesday.

Mired in recession, the United States called for faster world growth to generate the funds

needed for the new world order of economic reform in eastern Europe and reconstruction of the Middle East.

In a concession to the United States, the G-7 communique alluded to the importance of global growth but also emphasised the need to bring inflation out of the world economy — a concern both to Germany and to Japan.

"Every country has a somewhat different situation and it's naturally appropriate for the respective countries to choose the appropriate course of action to deal with their specific situation," Canadian Finance Minister Donald Mazankowski said.

The United States, Britain and Canada are in the midst of recession, the economies of Italy and France are slowing down, while growth in Germany and Japan remains relatively robust.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady said he was not disappointed with the outcome of the meeting but acknowledged the G-7 had not reached agreement to change interest rates.

However, he told reporters he foresaw the lowering of Japanese and German interest rates.

German officials made clear that they were not opposed to easier credit, but said that the best way to achieve that was to bring inflation down.

"We are not against lower rates but they must be earned," Bundesbank President Karl Otto Poehl said.

None of the other G-7 members seemed to agree with America's contention that zero inflation was an unattainable "holy grail" and in the end United States had to back down on the issue and agree on the necessity of price stability.

"Ministers and governors emphasised the importance of monetary and fiscal policies which provide the basis for lower real interest rates and a sustained global economic recovery with price stability," the G-7 said in its communique.

The group also appeared to have difficulties reaching agreement on what to do about the high-flying dollar, which has risen more than 20 per cent against the Deutschmark in the past few months.

The communique did not specifically mention the dollar but instead reaffirmed the commitment of the G-7 "to cooperate closely on exchange markets."

The dollar jumped in Far East trading with dealers there citing the G-7's failure to make any mention of the dollar's future trend as the reason for the currency's renewed rise.

Brady evinced little worry about the dollar, saying that despite its recent rise it was still within the ranges that had prevailed over the past three to four years.

But Japanese Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said he told the group that the value of the Japanese yen on currency markets was too low.

World Bank to focus on fighting urban poverty, pollution and productivity

WASHINGTON (AP) — The World Bank said Monday it will shift from financing low-cost projects in the developing world's cities in favour of large-scale efforts it hopes will better address urban problems.

The international lending institution's policy will focus on fighting poverty and pollution while increasing the productivity of the 1.3 billion people who live in exploding Third World cities.

For too long, government efforts supported by lenders have addressed urban growth and poverty by backing low-cost shelter, water supply, sanitation and transit projects, said a report by Michael Cohen, chief of the bank's Urban Development Division.

Such projects "have not had major impact on the policies of national and local governments

and the broader issues of managing the urban economy," the report said.

It estimated that one-fourth of the urban population in the developing world lives in absolute poverty and says urban poverty is growing faster than rural poverty in many countries.

Under the new policy, the bank expects to back large-scale projects intended to improve housing, develop land, upgrade slums, build transit systems, create jobs, fight pollution and improve city governments.

The report responds to rapid growth in Third World cities and towns, which are expected to account for two-thirds of the world's population increase by the end of the decade.

The policy paper noted that 20 of the world's 25 largest cities will be in the developing world by the year 2000.

It outlined bank strategies for increasing productivity, attacking poverty, addressing environmental problems and increasing research on urban development.

The urban share of developing countries' economies is as high as 80 per cent, it said, and yet some governments continue to avoid steps that would help its city dwellers to become more productive. The report cited excessive regulation of housing construction in Malaysia as an example.

The biggest pollution problem in most cities is unsafe drinking water, the report said. Air pollution and exposure to toxic chemicals also cause widespread health problems and increased mortality rates, it said.

The report estimated that motor vehicle traffic and the emissions it causes will grow five to 10 per cent a year in developing countries.

Asian Development Bank sees loans to China by May

VANCOUVER (R) — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has said it will resume lending to China as early as next month.

The Manila-based bank, which last year loaned \$4 billion to the region's poorest countries, suspended loans to China after Beijing's crackdown on political dissent in June 1989.

Bank president Kimimasa, Tarumizu said, many governors believe the time has come to normalise lending to China.

The United States, which earlier opposed loan resumption, offered no opposition at the bank's annual meeting.

"The fact is they didn't indicate

any particular intentions, no particular comment in the course of the governors' meeting," Tarumizu told a news conference.

Asked when the bank might resume lending, he said: "As soon as possible — sometime in May."

The group of seven major industrialised countries has already recommended resuming loans, but only for humanitarian and environmental purposes. The Washington-based World Bank has resumed full lending.

But ADB loans for purely economic projects have remained frozen. They include two totalling \$137.5 million for a toll bridge in Shanghai and a railway in southern China.

Most delegates at the meeting said China and India should be allowed to borrow from a special bank fund that offers interest-free loans to the poorest countries.

"Some governors also commented on the desirability of resuming lending to Myanmar and Vietnam," Tarumizu said.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES			
Monday, April 29, 1991 Central Bank official rates:			
	Buy	Sell	
U.S. dollar	684.0	688.0	114.1
Pound Sterling	1141.1	1147.9	492.5
Deutschmark	385.0	387.3	341.1
Swiss franc	457.5	460.2	344.0
			108.4
			109.1
			52.1
			52.4
			187.1
			188.1

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES			
LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.			
	One Sterling	One U.S. dollar	
	1.6750/60	1.1520/25	
	1.7720/30	1.7720/30	
	1.9925/35	1.4930/40	
	36.44/48	5.9790/9840	
	1308/1309	1308/1309	
	138.60/70	6.2850/2900	
	6.8800/50	6.8800/50	
	6.7600/50	6.7600/50	
One ounce of gold	350.75/351.25		

WORLD STOCK MARKETS	
By Reuters	
HONG KONG — Selective buying pulled stocks out of the morning doldrums in a day of lacklustre trade. The Hang Seng index ended 1.08 points down at 3,624.72.	
SINGAPORE — Shares closed mixed in dull trading with many blue chips consolidating and foreign shares falling. The Straits Times index ended at 1,558.64, up 0.23.	
BOMBAY — Shares prices fell broadly after a weak start on uncertainties over the outcome of general elections next month. The Bombay Stock Exchange index fell 21.13 points to 1,267.46.	
FRANKFURT — Shares closed below their former opening levels after month-end position squaring eroded gains from foreign buying interest. The Dax index ended at 1,620.28 points after Friday's 1,623.81 close.	
ZURICH — An inconclusive outcome to the group of seven meeting in Washington dampened sentiment. Wall Street's steady opening failed to stimulate the market. The SPI index edged up 1.9 points to 1,078.8.	
PARIS — The CAC-40 index recouped all of last week's losses, flirted with 1,800 and closed up 22.68 points to 1,797.35. But volume was paltry and concentrated in a handful of Blue Chips.	
LONDON — The FTSE index gained 16.9 points to 2,498.2 on hopes for an interest rate cut and a better showing by the ruling Conservatives in local elections Thursday.	
NEW YORK — The Dow Jones Industrials were up 14.11 points at 1550 GMT to 2,926.49. Many investors remained out of the market ahead of Friday's April jobs data.	

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Yeltsin flies to Siberia for talks with striking miners

MOSCOW (R) — Russian populist leader Boris Yeltsin flew to western Siberia Monday to patch up a fragile alliance between his democratic opposition movement and striking coalminers.

Aides to Yeltsin, a hugely popular figure among ordinary Russians, said he carried a specific plan to get the 300,000 Soviet miners back down the pits and stop further damage to the weakening economy.

The Russian Federation president's programme included talks with strike leaders and a May Day speech in Novokuznetsk, a major mining town in the Kuzbass Basin and a hotbed of labour militancy.

Local mine leaders, who touched off a nine-week strike in which they have demanded the resignation of President Mikhail Gorbachev and dissolution of the federal parliament, remained sceptical of Yeltsin's call for a return to work.

"We are very difficult people to deal with. It is not Yeltsin who will decide our course in the end," said a member of the strike committee in Novokuznetsk.

"Boris Yeltsin flies to us with some document and he will try to get us out of the strike. Everything will depend on what he is bringing with him," said a city spokesman.

There were signs miners and other strikers were beginning to comply in other parts of the country. In the giant Ukrainian Donbass Coalfield, second only to the Kuzbass in size, 10 more pits went back to work over the weekend.

Yeltsin, standard bearer of the liberal opposition, is seen as capable of exerting far greater influence on the Soviet workforce than his arch-rival Gorbachev. Last week he signed a joint appeal with Gorbachev calling for an end to the crippling stoppages in exchange for early elections and relief from sharp price hikes imposed on April 2.

The deal, hammered out at Gorbachev's new state Dacha, sent shock waves through the independent labour movement and the democratic opposition — which had set aside their mutual distrust and agreed on a radical

political programme.

Leaders of the big Democratic Russia Movement, meeting at the weekend, blasted Yeltsin for supporting the back-to-work call and the implementation of "special regime" in key industries.

They nonetheless overwhelmingly nominated him as their candidate in the June 12 polls for the new executive Russian presidency, arguing he remained the best hope for ending 73 years of Communist misrule.

"If all the provisions in the statement are fulfilled, it would be reasonable to stop the strike," Sergei Stankevich, deputy mayor of Moscow and a leading opposition figure, said Monday, summing up the cautious democratic support.

And it seemed likely Yeltsin could similarly win over many of the strikers, handing him an enormous moral and political victory over Gorbachev, who has refused even to discuss their political demands.

At the same time, it became increasingly clear that Gorbachev had silenced — for now — headline critics in his ruling

Communist Party.

Speeches published Monday from last week's Central Committee session showed the Soviet leader's sudden threat to resign in the face of a barrage of criticism turned the tide of the plenary session.

Speaking after the decisive defeat of a motion to consider Gorbachev's resignation, former Interior Minister Vadim Bakatin warned his fellow Communists the party would die without Gorbachev at its head.

"It is hard to predict but of course the party would have been pushed to the sidelines forever," said Bakatin, himself forced from office by hardline conservatives in the party.

Meanwhile a Lithuanian worker doused himself with petrol and set himself on fire in the central square of Lithuania's capital Vilnius. TASS news agency said Monday.

The man, Rolandas Valavicius, 20, was taken to hospital with severe burns. The motives for his action, which took place late Sunday, were unclear, TASS said.

Rocard apologises for Rainbow Warrior

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (R) — French Prime Minister Michel Rocard will meet Greenpeace for the first time Tuesday, but his support for a pristine Antarctica will win him little credit with the environmental group.

Rocard began his visit to New Zealand Monday by apologising for the 1985 bombing by French agents of the Greenpeace flagship, Rainbow Warrior, in Auckland Harbour.

But he defended French nuclear testing in the South Pacific and said it would continue. For Greenpeace, neither the apology nor his support for an Antarctic World Park can justify the determination to continue nuclear testing.

"They are asking for there to be a nuclear-free zone in Antarctica, so why can't they support one for the Pacific as well?" asked Greenpeace campaigner Stephanie Mills, who will meet Rocard along with other environmentalists in the South Island city of Christchurch.

The Rainbow Warrior had been due to lead a protest flotilla to France's nuclear test site at Mururoa Atoll when the agents struck, killing a Greenpeace photographer.

"My country committed an act which was wrong," Rocard told a news conference. "That incident caused a cloud over our relationships."

Rocard was expected to stress his commitment to preserving Antarctica's fragile environment on his visit to Christchurch, a base for scientists flying to the continent, along with his environment minister, Brice Lalonde. Their schedule includes a visit to the city's International Antarctic Centre.

Greenpeace has praised the Rocard government for backing an international campaign to ban mining in Antarctica. Mills said her group's opposition to testing was not negotiable.

"I think generally... they are trying to portray themselves as very much pro-environment," she said. "But our position is that it's not a credit system, where if you are good on something you can be bad on something else. I don't think that people in New Zealand would buy that either."

Powerful quake rocks Turkish-Armenian border

ISTANBUL (R) — An earthquake measuring 6.5 on the open-ended Richter Scale rocked the Turkish-Armenian border Monday, with its epicentre in northern Soviet Transcaucasia, the Bosphorus University Seismology Observatory said.

Observatory officials said the quake was felt in the eastern Turkish towns of Kars, Erzurum, Ardahan and Artvin. There were no immediate reports of casualties, they said.

Sweden's Uppsala University said earlier it had monitored a quake measuring 7.2 on the Richter Scale on the border between the Soviet Republic of Armenia and Turkey.

A spokesman for the Soviet Seismological Station said the tremor, which registered 6.5 on the 12-point Soviet scale, hit the area around Kutaisi, the second largest city in Georgia, at 12.12 p.m. Moscow time (0912 GMT). Georgia is northwest of Armenia.

A security official in the eastern Turkish border town of Kars

said the quake struck at 12.15 p.m. (0915 GMT) and lasted for about 15 seconds. He said there were no reports of major damage.

"It was a very strong quake. We are checking with the townships but so far we have no reports of casualties," Cafer Yildiz, deputy governor of Artvin bordering the Soviet Union, told Reuters.

Turkey's semi-official Anatolian News Agency, quoting state seismology officials in Ankara, said there were two aftershocks — at 12.32 p.m. (0932 GMT) and 12.30 p.m. (0939 GMT).

Iranian seismologists put the magnitude of the quake at 7.0 on the Richter Scale. The Geophysics Institute of Tehran University said the quake struck at 0915 GMT east of the Black Sea between Armenia and Turkey. It placed the epicentre about 1,100 kilometres northwest of Tehran, the Iranian News Agency IRNA reported.

Indian forces seize top Kashmiri militant

SRINAGAR, India (R) — Indian security forces have arrested a leader of the main Kashmiri militant group fighting for the independence of the Himalayan region, police said Monday.

They said Mohammad Saleem, deputy chief commander of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), was picked up during raids Sunday in Srinagar, summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir which is the only Muslim-majority state in largely Hindu India.

Saleem succeeded to the post last year when JKLF military chief Yaseen Malik and his deputy, Sheikh Abdul Hameed, were arrested in a similar raid in Srinagar. They are still in a Delhi jail, detained without trial under anti-terrorism laws.

Saleem had recently been acting JKLF commander while Malik's successor, Javed Ahmad Mir, was on the Pakistani side of the line that divides the one-third of Kashmir ruled by Islamabad from Jammu and Kashmir.

Mir has returned to the Indian side of the line and expressed bitterness against Pakistan in a recent interview with Reuters. He said Islamabad was supporting only those militant groups

wanting to merge with Pakistan and was dividing and weakening the anti-Indian fight as a result. The JKLF is fighting for a re-united and independent Kashmir.

Pakistan denies Indian charges that it arms and trains Kashmiri militants.

Police reported no progress in the search for two Swedish engineers kidnapped nearly a month ago by the Muslim Janbaz (Crusader) Force (MJF). Telephone calls saying they spoke for the MJF told Srinagar-based reporters over the weekend that Johan Jansson and Jan-Ole Loman would be released once its demands were met.

The MJF, saying it seized the two men on March 31 to draw international attention to alleged human rights abuses by security forces, has demanded Amnesty International and the United Nations send teams to investigate the charges.

Amnesty International turned down the demand, as did the Indian government, which does not allow foreigners to investigate charges of human rights abuses on the grounds that its legal system is adequate to deal with them.

Sri Lankan rebels ambush troops, kill 25

COLOMBO (R) — Tamil rebels killed at least 25 Sri Lankan government soldiers in an ambush Monday, military sources said shortly after the authorities claimed victory in a four-day offensive against the separatist guerrillas.

Two platoons from an army camp in Nanadand in northwest Mannar district were on patrol

when they were attacked by fighters of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Two officers were believed to be among the 25 killed, the sources said. No further details were immediately available.

Earlier, military authorities hailed as a success a four-day offensive against the Tigers in northern Jaffna peninsula in

which at least 126 rebels and 31 soldiers were killed.

About 150 Tigers and 70 soldiers were believed in the air, land and sea offensive against rebel positions on Karaitivu and Kayts Islands and at Elephant Pass, the sources said.

A curfew imposed last Thursday on the peninsula, the Tigers' stronghold, continued in force.

S. Korean police attack rally

SEOUL (R) — South Korean riot police fired tear-gas Monday to stop nearly 10,000 protesters marching into the centre of the capital to denounce the death of a student beaten by police.

"Bring back Kang Kyung-Dae, down with murderer (President) Roh Tae-woo," chanted students and dissidents, who tried to take over a street outside Yonsei University in Western Seoul. Kang, a 20-year-old freshman at Seoul's Myungji University, died Friday after five riot policemen hit him on the head and body with iron pipes during a campus protest.

Riot police, hugely outnumbered by the demonstrators, battled to control them; as they tried to march toward the city centre.

Most of the protesters fled back into the campus when the thousands of riot police, backed by black vans spewing tear-gas, moved forward to disperse them. The protesters later staged their anti-government rally inside the campus.

In the southwestern city of Kwangju, a woman student doused herself with petrol and set herself on fire Monday in an anti-government rally in memory of Kang and attended by about 1,200 students.

Park Seung-Hye, a second year student at Chonnam University, sustained second and third degree burns and her life was in danger, a hospital spokesman said.

Thousands of students fought running battles with riot police in Pusan, Taejeon and other major South Korean cities after holding memorial rallies, Yonhap News Agency said.

Prime Minister Ro Jae-Bong apologised earlier Monday for Kang's death. However, dissidents and students vowed to go ahead with protest rallies this week against what they called government brutality.

"On behalf of the government, I give my deep regrets and sincerely apologise to Kang Kyung-Dae's parents and the nation for the incident," Ro told a cabinet meeting called to discuss the incident. Kim, who celebrated his 79th birthday this month, is the object of perhaps the world's most intense personality cult, rivaling or even surpassing in scale the cults of Chinese and Soviet leaders Mao Tseung and Josef Stalin.

He walked unaided to the rostrum in the cavernous Mansudae Assembly Hall where North Korea's parliament, the Supreme People's Assembly, holds its sessions. He spoke in a strong, clear voice.

A bronze statue of Kim outside the nearby Korean Revolution Museum stands so tall that a person posing next to it would scarcely reach above the trouser cuffs.

His arrival in the hall was preceded by trumpet calls of a military brass band. North Korean delegates, all wearing lapel badges of Kim, stood to attention and applauded as he entered.

Pyeongyang, flattened by U.S. bombers during the 1950-53 Korean War, has been rebuilt as monument to Kim and his unique brand of self-reliant communism, known as Juche.

As Kim ages, his policies are under threat from an impending economic collapse and democratic changes in Eastern Europe that have left it more isolated than at any time since the Korean peninsula was divided in 1945. Among the delegates Monday were members of parliament from South Korea, who arrived Saturday despite a furor over reported comments by the South Korean defence minister about Pyongyang's nuclear threat that threatened to scuttle the visit.

Manila warns U.S. it must withdraw from bases without new agreement

MANILA (R) — The Philippines warned the United States Monday it would have to withdraw its forces from the country if the two sides cannot bridge continued deep differences over a new military bases agreement.

Philippine Foreign Secretary Raul Manglapus said the United States had failed to present any new proposal to meet Manila's demand for \$25 million in annual compensation for the bases.

The United States has offered only \$360 million a year for continued use of Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Dockyard, the two largest American military facilities in Asia.

Speaking ahead of the arrival of U.S. negotiator Richard Armitage, Manglapus told reporters that if the two sides were unable to compromise "then we will have to prepare for the withdrawal of the United States."

The present agreement expires

in September, and under the Philippine constitution U.S. forces will have to withdraw if there is not a new treaty, ending almost a century-long American military presence in the former U.S. colony.

The two countries have negotiated for almost a year, but have been unable to agree on compensation for the length of a new accord. The Philippines has offered seven years, but the United States wants at least 10.

The two negotiating panels will meet again Tuesday. Asked what would happen if they could not reach an agreement in this sixth round of talks, Manglapus said there was "no visible alternative" to invoking the present agreement that requires a U.S. withdrawal.

Armitage made no immediate statement on arrival, but was scheduled to hold talks later with Manglapus.

The Philippine Foreign Secretary urged the United States to show flexibility on the compensation issue.

"We feel that we have already been flexible," he said. He said the Philippines wanted only half the compensation in cash or grants. The rest could be provided in a "soft component" comprising trade credits, delivery of surplus military and medical supplies and debt relief.

The Philippines wants a new agreement on the bases to help its economy. The bases 70,000 Filipino workers and bring in an estimated \$1 billion a year in direct spending and indirect economic benefits.

But Manglapus said to produce a package that will get approval by two-thirds of the Philippine Senate. At present many of the 23 members in the Senate oppose a new agreement.

Hun Sen sees progress in Jakarta peace talks

BANGKOK (R) — Phnom Penh Prime Minister Hun Sen said Monday he believed progress could be made at Cambodian peace talks scheduled for Jakarta in May and called on all nations to stop sending arms into his country.

Hun Sen told Reuters he believed a ceasefire proposed by peace-brokers nations and the United Nations secretary general to create goodwill for the Jakarta talks might take hold.

"I believe that there should be some achievement" in Jakarta, he said, an interview.

Diplomats in Bangkok who monitor Cambodian affairs have said Hun Sen is likely to propose alternatives in Indonesia to aspects of a U.N. Security Council peace plan that his government finds dangerous.

The Vietnamese-backed Phnom Penh government has said it fears disarmament under the U.N. plan might be erratically enforced and lead to a return to power of the Khmer Rouge. More than one million Cambodians died under the rule of the Khmer Rouge in the late 1970s.

Phnom Penh also thinks it should not surrender sovereignty



Hun Sen

to U.N. administrations, as called for in the plan, and wants any peace pact to refer to the Khmer Rouge's alleged genocide.

"Though the remaining issues could not be completely settled, I hope fight some of them may resolve," he said of the Jakarta conference.

"Of course, we are very ambitious," he said. "We would like to have all these remaining issues settled for good."

N. Korea urges nuclear disarmament

PYONGYANG (R) — To thunderous applause, North Korea's hardline Stalinist leader Kim Il-Sung exhorted parliamentarians from around the world Monday to fight for democracy and nuclear disarmament.

"Disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons and other types of mass destruction weapons is now the most pressing task in ensuring peace," Kim told delegates from about 90 countries at the opening ceremony of an Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) conference in Pyongyang where dangers of nuclear proliferation will be a key topic.

North Korea itself has become the focus of international fears about nuclear proliferation with U.S. intelligence reports showing Pyongyang may be only a few years away from producing its own nuclear bomb. Pyongyang denies it is manufacturing weapons.

"The test and production of nuclear weapons must be banned, the existing nuclear weapons must be reduced and, further, all nuclear weapons must be completely abolished," said Kim who is known to his people as the "great leader".

Kim, who celebrated his 79th birthday this month, is the object of perhaps the world's most intense personality cult, rivaling or even surpassing in scale the cults of Chinese and Soviet leaders Mao Tseung and Josef Stalin. He walked unaided to the rostrum in the cavernous Mansudae Assembly Hall where North Korea's parliament, the Supreme People's Assembly, holds its sessions. He spoke in a strong, clear voice.

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U.S. presidential campaign for 1992 gets under way

LOWELL, Massachusetts (R) — The 1992 U.S. presidential campaign gets under way officially Tuesday when little-known former Democratic senator who says he has beaten cancer enters the race for the White House.

Paul Tsongas, 50, will be the first major Democrat to declare his candidacy for that party's presidential nomination — a political comeback after his retirement from the Senate more than six years ago to fight cancer.

After a bone marrow transplant and radiation treatment, Tsongas says he has beaten the disease and is ready to take on the task — against formidable odds — of trying to win the nomination and defeat popular Republican President George Bush in 1992.

He has won two-year terms in the House of Representatives and a six-year Senate term from Massachusetts, but the big task ahead of him is daunting.

Few people recognise him. He must overcome public scepticism about his health. And aides say he has less than \$300,000 so far to mount a campaign.

To prove he is healthy, Tsongas raced in a national swimming meeting over the weekend in Indianapolis.

A liberal Boston lawyer, he calls himself a "pro-business Democrat" out to reform a party that he claims has alienated businessmen.

By getting business support, he insists he can put Democrats back into the White House, held by

Republican presidents in five of the six elections since 1968. His platform calls for politically risky tax breaks and a capital gains tax break.

No prominent Democrat had endorsed Tsongas, who wants an industrial policy that will allow the United States to dominate world trade again.

No matter who wins the nomination, the fight against Bush will be tough. The president's public approval rating has fallen from a record 90 per cent after the Gulf war but it still a high 78 per cent.

Bush is expected to announce his candidacy for re-election early next year.

Several Democrats are expected to seek nomination and must compete, in primaries and party meeting called caucuses in each state, for support from voting delegates to a presidential nominating convention in New York next July.

Others who may run include Virginia Governor Douglas Wilder, first elected black governor of any state in 1989, 1972 Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern, Senator Al Gore of Tennessee and Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas, the vice presidential candidate in 1988 when presidential nominee Michael Dukakis was beaten by Bush.

Civil rights leader Jesse Jackson, who tried twice for the nomination and came in second to Dukakis, has said he will decide by late autumn whether to run.

COLUMN

Charles, Diana end Brazil trip

BELEM, Brazil (R) — Well-wishers outnumbered protesters as Britain's Prince Charles ended a five-day trip to Brazil in Belem near the mouth of the Amazon. Protesters with banners saying "Charles go home" and "Amazonia is ours" greeted the Prince of Wales when he arrived Friday to host a two-day environmental seminar. The protesters gathered on the quayside as Prince Charles and Brazilian President Fernando Collor de Mello attended the seminar aboard the royal yacht Britannia, moored nearby. But it was mostly well-wishers who waved to Prince Charles when he came ashore Saturday after the end of the seminar to fly back to London. However, smaller protests continued. The protesters were angry because no one from the Amazon region was invited to attend the seminar, which brought together British and Brazilian government ministers, leading businessmen, bankers and diplomats. The Princess of Wales flew to Belem from Rio de Janeiro to return to London with her husband.

Actress arrested on drug charges

CERVETERI, Italy (AP) — Actress Laura Antonelli, a sex symbol of the 1970s, was arrested at her villa early Saturday for investigation of cocaine possession, police said. An officer of the Carabinieri paramilitary police in Cerveteri, a city 50 kilometres north of Rome, said 50 grammes (1.75 ounces) of cocaine was found in her home by a policeman about 12:30 a.m. RAI state television showed Carabinieri holding the drug it said was found on a silver tray on a table. Police said she was being held at Rome's Rebibbia Prison. RAI said she would be questioned Monday. The officer declined to say what prompted the policeman to go to the house. Police said she was alone in the house at the time. Antonelli, 49, gained popularity in 1973 in the film Malizia, by Salvador Samperi. She went on to star in films by Luigi Comencini, Luciano Ercoli, Claudio Gora, Mauro Bolognini and Ettore Scola. In recent years she has appeared in some television films.

Canadian women protest judge's rape decision

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (R) — Angry Canadian women have protested against a judge who, clearing a man of rape, said a woman's "no" sometimes meant "maybe" or "wait a while." British Columbia Supreme Court Judge Sherman Hood found that a 36-year-old woman who met a man in a bar in March last year did not resist enough when he made advances in her apartment. The woman pushed the man away and told him, "no." But the judge ruled that was not enough to justify a rape conviction. "At times 'no' may mean 'maybe' or 'wait a while,'" Hood said. About 50 women demonstrated outside Vancouver City Centre's courthouse, carrying placards with slogans such as "no means no." "We would like the judge removed from the bench," said Colleen Smith of the group Women Against Violence Against Women. British Columbia Women's Minister Carol Grant said she found the judge's comments offensive. Psychology Professor Rhonda Steinberg of Simon Fraser University said they amounted to a licence to sexually assault women.

Women conquer last Swiss bastion of male supremacy

APPENZEL, Switzerland (AP) — Women conquered the last Swiss bastion of male supremacy as they joined men in voting at the annual legislative assembly of the country's smallest state. It took an order of Switzerland's supreme court to have women finally admitted as voters in the traditional outdoor legislative assembly of Appenzel-Rhodes (interior), the smallest canton (state) with a population of 14,000. The women seemed to be eagerly making use of their newly won right to have a say on local matters. They made up about half of the 4,000 attending the meeting where voting is still done in public and by a show of hands. The meeting came 20 years after a national referendum in which Swiss women won the vote on federal matters and ten years after the federal constitution was revised to include a formal equal rights amendment.

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